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THE COLLECTED POEMS  
OF  
RODEN NOEL







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Notte Noel

THE  
COLLECTED POEMS  
OF  
RODEN NOEL

WITH A NOTICE BY THE LATE  
JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

LONDON  
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO. LTD  
PATERNOSTER HOUSE, CHARING CROSS ROAD  
1902

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## INTRODUCTORY NOTE

RODEN BERKELEY WRIOTHESLEY NOEL was born on the 27th of August 1834, and was the son of the first Earl of Gainsborough (second creation) by his marriage with Lady Frances Jocelyn, daughter of the Earl of Roden. Much of his childhood was spent at Barham Court, Kent, and at Exton Park, Rutlandshire, diversified by many excursions abroad with his parents.

At the age of twelve he was sent to Harrow, leaving there after two years to become the pupil of the Rev. Charles Harbin, at Hindon in Wiltshire. He afterwards went to Trinity College, Cambridge, graduating M.A. in 1858. Subsequently he travelled for two years in the East, visiting Egypt, Nubia, the Holy Land, Palmyra, then Lebanon, Greece, and Turkey. At Beirout he met with a serious illness, through which he was nursed by Madame de Broë, the wife of a banker in that city, whose daughter, Alice, he married in 1863.

By this marriage there were three children, Frances, Conrad, and Eric, the last of whom died at the age of five, and was the subject of "*A Little Child's Monument*."

He lived for the most part in England, latterly at Brighton, and passed away suddenly, while travelling, at Mainz, on May 26, 1894.

In addition to his poetical works he published "*Essays on Poetry and Poets*," "*Life of Lord Byron*" (Great Writers' Series), "*A Philosophy of Immortality*," and the following Editions: "*Poems of Edmund Spenser, with Introduction*" (Canterbury Poets), and

"*Thomas Otway, with Introduction and Notes*" (Vizetelly & Co.): also many essays, philosophical, literary, and social.

In the welfare of the poor, the sorrowful, and the oppressed, he showed throughout his whole life a practical as well as a keen and loving interest, and the last thing he published was an essay in "*Vox Clamantium*" on "*Christianity and Social Advance*."

His friend, the late Dr. Henry Sidgwick, thus writes of him and of his powers as a thinker: "I never came from a talk with him without feeling afresh the rarity and richness of his nature, his deep poetic heart and his sensitiveness to all things beautiful in Nature and all things noble and pathetic in human life. I never knew any one who seemed more at home in that higher region of thought and feeling, into which most of us rise occasionally with some effort, when the great realities of human life and destiny are not only intellectually grasped, but felt with full intensity."

I have long cherished the wish that my brother's poems should be collected and made easily accessible, and the present book is the fulfilment of that wish.

One volume, the first that he published, is omitted from the present collection, in deference to his wish that it should be suppressed. It is referred to in the notes. A few poems, hitherto unpublished, have been added.

The notice by the late John Addington Symonds appeared in the "*Academy*" for January 19, 1889, as a review of "*A Modern Faust and Other Poems*."

To the author's own notes, at the end of the book, have been appended a few extracts from his private letters. Though never intended for publication, they throw light on certain passages of the poems.

VICTORIA BUXTON.

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<sup>1</sup> A posthumous volume.

<sup>2</sup> Some hitherto unpublished, some published in periodicals.



# RODEN NOEL

BY JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS

THE HON. RODEN NOEL, as a poet, has never yet received the attention he deserves. This is not altogether the fault of the English public. Mr. Noel's poems are not exactly such as he who runs may read. To be appreciated they require patient study, not only because their thought is often abstruse, but also because their expression is not unfrequently perplexing. Indeed, no other poet of our age, with the exception of Mr. Robert Browning, has added so much of verbal and rhythmical difficulty to the difficulties of pregnant meaning and bold speculation. Mr. Noel is what Goethe would have called an incommensurable man; and his work cannot be measured by any common standard or sounded by any average plummet. It is probable that his poems will not receive due recognition until a Noel Society has been founded. By this I mean again to place him in the same rank as Mr. Browning, who waited for his popularity until a band of students were enrolled to dedicate their time and talents to the exploration of his labyrinths of thought. If this happens in the case of Mr. Noel, people will discover that an impassioned singer, a philosopher of marked originality, a tender-hearted Christian, and a democrat in the noblest sense of the term, has been appealing to them in words of wayward beauty and varied melody during more than a quarter of a century, almost unheeded.

"A Modern Faust" justifies this somewhat audacious prophecy. It is at once the most intelligible and the deepest of Mr. Roden Noel's poems, the purest in style, the widest in scope, the ripest in artistic execution, and the maturest in expression of its author's views. Those who, like the present writer, have watched Mr. Noel's career with interest and admiration, qualified by grave doubt as to his ultimate attainment of the poet's crown, may stake their critical reputation upon this remarkable performance, and invite an indifferent public to its perusal with confidence that the study it demands will be repaid. This is not saying that the peculiarities of manner which have repelled fastidious lovers of verse are absent from Mr. Noel's latest work, or that the subtlety and remoteness of thought which render his poems inaccessible to careless readers have been exchanged for facile treatment of momentous themes. At first sight "A Modern Faust" is even more amorphous than its predecessors. It combines lyrical measures with the thorniest moral problems, and attempts a provisional solution of what most men regard as insoluble. Its philosophy—strongly tinged with mysticism, and assuming the fundamental doctrine of spiritualism—is such as only

a minority of thinkers can at present accept. Yet so far as form is concerned, the lyrics are so musical in their peculiar kind, the blank verse is so characteristic, the prose is so vigorous and packed with sense, the unrhymed metre is so well adapted to its purpose, that unprejudiced students will be forced to recognise a master's hand; and in a master it is assuredly a merit, not a defect, to have created a manner of his own. As regards the thought, difficult as that may be to seize, it has the same virtue of originality and decision. We need not agree with Mr. Noel's theory of man's relation to the universe; but we are compelled to admit that no poet of this century in England has more resolutely faced the riddle of the world, prepared himself for his gigantic task with more anxiety of study, and presented an ambitious metaphysical system with more manful effort after coherence.

The philosophy which distinguishes Mr. Noel among his brother poets is better adapted, I think, to the medium of verse than to prose exposition; and in "*A Modern Faust*" it reaches final expression. To characterise it by any single term is difficult. One might perhaps venture to call it uncompromising idealism. The universe appears to Mr. Noel, as to Giordano Bruno, a God-penetrated unity. Nothing is real except spirit, and all is spirit. This does not make him a shallow or complacent optimist. No one has felt the world-pain, the agony of sin, the cruel curse of evil, more acutely. No pessimist, not Leopardi nor James Thomson, has depicted what men and women suffer, with such poignant realism and such tender sympathy. Unlike metaphysicians he deals with no mere abstractions. His grasp upon the concrete is even more remarkable than his habit of looking beyond and through the concrete to its thought-substratum. In like manner his familiarity with speculative problems does not make him a mere visionary. The poet's eye for colour, shape, all things of sense, remains undimmed. To some tastes, indeed, his descriptions of natural joy, his appreciation of the voluptuous and gorgeous, will appear even extravagant. In this book the "*Triumph of Bacchus*" and the ode on "*Pan*" must be reckoned among the most sensuous and passionate productions of our literature. With the same keen sense of reality he feels the pure, the tender, the pathetic, the holy things of life; the heroism of brave men and martyrs, the sublime beauty of the loving, suffering Christ, the saintliness of noble women, the saving innocence of children. What constitutes this poet "incommensurable" is the extraordinary range of his sympathies, the justice of his touch upon so many diverse aspects of the outer and inner world, his combination of idealistic philosophy with artistic realism.

"*A Modern Faust*" is the history of a man's life-experience, cast mainly in autobiographical form. It begins with the picture of innocent childhood in a religious country home. The boy, growing into youth and early manhood, travels, loves, marries, loses a fondly-cherished child. Doubts about the goodness of God assail him when he considers the sufferings of human beings, especially of children; and at this point of his experience he is inclined to charge the fault on man's perverse will and evil customs. He seeks relief in carnal pleasure, and intoxicates his imagination with the spectacle of triumphant nature. In this stage its due value is assigned to what we call pantheism. Lyrics, marked by

exuberance of colour and highly idealised materialism, remind us here of Mr. Noel's earlier manner. But sensual opiates cannot numb the spiritual ache within the Modern Faust. He takes refuge in seclusion from the world and woos asceticism. Yet he cannot submit to authority or stifle his reason. Next he tries study and resolves to explore the riddle of his destiny upon the paths of thought and erudition. Finding the isolation of a library barren and unbearable he once more wanders out among his brethren, surveys the existing contradiction between religious ideals and practical worldliness in the Church, learns the flimsiness of art and æstheticism, explores the empty wilderness of good society, listens to the conflicting theories of literary men—to scientific speculators, philanthropic panacea-mongers, socialists, preachers, politicians—all the babel of our highly cultivated age. This part of the work is executed in prose; but a poem called "Ragnarok" (or Twilight of the Gods) is interpolated, the sonorous rhythms and far-sounding reverberations of which set all that biting satire of the prose to music of a deeply agitated brain. The ground-swell of intellectual Atlantics, stirred to their abysses by the storm and stress of conflicting theories, booms throughout the surging periods of the verse. Stunned and bewildered by social and mental chaos, the man takes flight to Nature. He has loved Nature from boyhood; and he flatters himself that, rocked upon her breast, he may yet find relief from the sin, the misery, the madness, and the cruelty of his own kind. This is a vain hope. Nature proves no less honeycombed with evil, pain, and strife, no less tyrannical, no less insane, than was the world of man. Wanton waste of life, disease, hereditary madness, deterioration working spiritual ruin by corruption of nerve-cells, wreckage through elemental wilfulness, the whole horrible array of sentient creatures dwarfed and doomed by inexplicable but inexorable law drives him back in rebellion. He

"Learns at length that not alone  
 Fault of ours hath wrought our moan.  
 Whence cometh evil, who shall say,  
 In man the creature of a day?  
 The dumb Sphinx-Nature dooms no less  
 Than men, though ne'er so pitiless;  
 Turns her thumbs down, votes for death.  
 The whole creation travaileth  
 With conflict, suffering, and care!"

Must, then, the fault be laid on God? Is the whole scheme of things awry, or deliberately intended to be torturing? Man, at any rate, is not responsible for Nature's cruelties. Human anguish, in the claws and jaws of Nature, assumes the shape of martyrdom rather than of sin. Just at this point, when the man's power of resistance is reduced to a minimum, the supreme trial awaits him. Satan, the Tempter, the Seducer, the Spirit of Despair, the living symbol of the Everlasting No, appears.

I break off my analysis here to say that this part of the poem displays Mr. Noel's genius in its plenitude of energy. On those who have once submitted to his influence, and accepted his manner, Book V. of "A Modern Faust"

will produce an ineffaceable impression. The specific faculty of this poet—his power of fusing the concrete and the abstract, of penetrating thought with sensuous reality, of incarnating ideas by the magic of a modern mythopœic intuition—is displayed with incisive, yet psychologically convincing sense of truth in the apparition of the Lord of Evil. The utter annihilation of all hope—the exclusion of all consolatory loop-holes—the absolute asphyxiation of a human spirit by mephitic vapours, rising, not from the imagination, but from hard, dull, grinding facts forced in upon the understanding and the senses, has, in my opinion, been never more cogently presented than in these pages.

What is the deliverance which Mr. Noel's philosophy offers to the human heart and soul in prison, stretched upon the rack of this tough world, the cords of which are tightened by apparent powers of evil? I leave the discovery of this to those who read his poem. It is enough to say that the concluding forty-two pages of "A Modern Faust"—those in which a solution of the painful riddle is at least provisionally attempted—are quite as powerfully written as the hundred and sixty-four which have preceded them. Owing to the fact that death is ever present on our earth, and that sin and suffering and incompleteness are conditions of our existence here, the case for the Devil can always be more convincingly and lucidly stated than the case for an all-sustaining and all-constituting Deity, in whom "evil and good are complemental." It is easier to describe disorder than order in the world, when we are dealing, not with its physical laws, but with its moral aspects. Yet the ethical value of Mr. Noel's work consists in the fact that he holds firmly by the belief that the Everlasting No is illusion, the Everlasting Yea reality; and he contrives by the force of his utterance to bring this belief home to our intelligence. So far as poetry goes, he displays no less vigour in the presentation of the faith that is in him than he previously displayed in the presentation of despair. In particular, I may mention that the style of these concluding sections assumes a gentle radiance, an ethereal suavity, for which we are hardly prepared by the yeasty turbulence, the sultry splendour, and the fuliginous gloom which mark his descriptions of mortal conflict. The most exquisitely wrought and delicately tinted of his lyrics, called "Fountain Song," occurs in this Book of Order. The vision of imparadised child-spirits, soothingly contrasted with the dreadful picture of tortured children in the first Book of Disorder, is touched throughout with a Blakelike purity of imagination. Indeed, Mr. Noel's conception of the universe might be compared with that of William Blake, both in its essential spirituality and quality of faith, and also in its uncompromising recognition of evil as a misunderstood factor in the scheme of things. But, after all is said and done, faith, like wisdom, is justified of her children; and how far the consolation offered in this poem will be found acceptable to those who have been saddened by its panorama of anguish and of sin, must depend upon the natural aptitude for faith in those who study it. With these words I quit what seems to me one of the most remarkable products of poetico-philosophic genius in the literature of our prolific century.

BEATRICE  
AND OTHER POEMS<sup>1</sup>

1868

<sup>1</sup> See Notes A and B.



# BEATRICE

## BOOK I

AFTER a childhood weakly, timid, shy,  
Whereon the common boy-experience,  
That braces vigorous constitution, fell  
Like rustling of some paper, or the grate  
On stones of carriage-wheel upon the sick,  
Clement lost mother and a sister dear  
In early boyhood; to his clinging heart  
And nature passionate, susceptible,  
Deep was the wound, loss irremediable.  
Yet from a spirit's shipwreck was he saved  
By a wise friend and kindly, having wit  
To touch the secret spring that laid to view  
High capabilities all undivined  
Of plodding fools; his cramped soul uncoiled  
Woke from her lethargy with slakeless thirst  
For questioning the how and why of all,  
deep thirst

For beauty, all the beauty in the world,  
With many a tremor nerving her to dare  
The steep imperial Conscience motioned from.  
Proud, wilful, passionate, and self-involved,  
He grew a dreamer tender and devout;  
Yet, with sore travail of a soul sincere,  
Soon drifted from his anchorage of creed  
Ever away, albeit to the last  
His mother's words, example, and her love  
He owned his spirit's richest sustenance.  
But as youth wore the longing came upon him  
For venturesome experience afar  
Of men diverse and stranger lands remote;  
Yet opening keen senses upon all,  
Maturing healthful vigour of the frame,  
So winning richer relish of mere life,  
Still yearned his restless spirit, hungering  
For sustenance of sympathy and love.  
Twice was he foiled—early by circumstance:  
He the blond Northern youth, and she the  
child

Of Southern suns and moons, daughter of fire,  
Drew to a mutual embrace, but shrank  
Baffled at finding that which seemed free air  
Was crystal fate duty forbade to break.  
Later there foiled him human treachery:  
A fascinating woman beautiful  
Out on the hunt for fresh experience  
Of diverse men, and gifted to assume  
At will the semblance of their sentiments,  
As does the mocking bird the notes of others,  
Toyed with the boy, half serious half in sport,  
But when she won him to a fond caress,  
Wearied, and spying a new creature pass,  
Out of the sleek and velvet paw there stole  
A cruel claw into his bosom soft.  
Long he lay bleeding, yet with dauntless heart  
Rallying, he resumed the sacred quest,  
Blaspheming not the holy thing he sought.

In lowly guise and in a lowly spot,  
And yet not lowlier than where Christ was  
born,  
He came upon it after seeking long.  
For in a mountain district in a fray  
Between some mountaineers with whom he  
dwelt  
He, chosen for mediator by a chance,  
Was wounded sore and carried to a cottage  
Of porch festooned with purple columbine:  
And entering, with feverish dim sight  
Beneath roof-wattles blackened of the smoke  
He saw a maiden by the ingle fire  
Stooping above a cauldron grined and huge  
Slung in the ingle from an iron hook,  
Who tended what was boiling, fondling soft  
The while a cat of drowsy eye that purred  
Upon a chair—a maiden in blue serge  
Wearing red-printed kerchief for her neck—  
Who turning showed the face that on his soul  
Would beam in warmth and light for evermore.

'Twas hard to fix the colour of her eyes :  
 They seemed to liquefy and melt beneath  
 Your own, and lure you into labyrinths  
 Of sweet infinitude, rich shrines of love,  
 Dissolved in love as summer skies in light ;  
 He only saw the child-face all suffused  
 From those seraphic eyes—he saw no more—  
 Unless indeed sleek shining rings of hair,  
 Fair hair on warm white neck and o'er her  
 shoulders ;

For as the door was opened, flowed the sun  
 Full on her as if waiting eagerly,  
 Impatient for admittance to the child—  
 Flowed over delicate ankle and slim feet  
 And over the frail figure, kissing face  
 And neck fire-rosy too abruptly when  
 She startling turned as men came bearing him.

Glimpses he caught of her performing well  
 Meekly her lowly services of home ;  
 And while he lay luxuriously weak,  
 With casement open, gloating in the light  
 Of summer evening sumptuous and large,  
 Inhaling balmy blossom-breathing air,  
 Music of sunny leaves, horizons fair,  
 Not seldom shyly would she falter nigh :  
 "For mother being very busy craves  
 You will excuse her sending, sir, by me  
 Your lemonade, and here are some fresh  
 flowers

From our wee garden I have culled for you."  
 But after slow retrieving forfeit health  
 At evening he would join the family,  
 Partaking of the homely meal with them,  
 Listing the sire's not unmelodious flute  
 After his labour of the day afield—  
 Relating travellers' experience  
 To them entrancing, novel, wonderful,  
 Mayhap in passing lightly naming names  
 The common wind of rumour blows abroad,  
 At which the sire or mother in amaze  
 Would question if himself had even seen  
 Or spoken to the mighty folk he named,  
 Welcoming an affirmative with awe.  
 But aye at culmination of the tale,  
 Whate'er the story, would the teller's eye  
 Stealthily visit one who sat apart  
 On yonder wooden settle in the nook,

Modestly knitting, with a look demure  
 Low-drooped upon the wool, surprising her  
 More than once leaning forward looking full  
 Upon him with sweet marvel in her eyes  
 And little open mouth and listless hands,  
 Blushing to meet his gaze at unaware,  
 Catching confusedly the falling wool ;  
 And then to bed, to magical fair dreams  
 Of brilliant lords and ladies, of rare scenes  
 Romantic, and the teller of the tales.

For him, he went to ponder if the look  
 Held only marvel, that and nothing more !  
 But it was after hesitating long,  
 Vowing to leave her in the sheltered nest  
 And, going, hide his bleeding heart from her,  
 Giddy and sick, foreboding a farewell,  
 Jealous of moments shutting them apart,  
 He made resolve to ask her for her love,  
 To pray that she would bless his lonely life.  
 With tremulous hope he sued—a moment  
 more  
 And she coy yielding lay upon his heart.

Vain jangled clapper-tongues of friends  
 inane

That he was noble, lowly born the girl ;  
 Was she not born for him and he for her ?  
 In salient life-crises like to this,  
 With heart and mind at one, their impetus  
 Bore him to action strong, unwavering.  
 In Italy they spent the primal days ;  
 After, he brought her to a cottage home  
 Where in calm lapse the sweet months  
 glided by.

Now the word Happiness broke on his soul  
 Like a new revelation ; empty wind  
 The mouthèd phrase had been to him before ;  
 Yet though his spirit fondled her young joy  
 She fondled it too like some timorous hare  
 Who fondly licks her furred young in the  
 grass,

Yet with one ear pricked ever and anon,  
 Lest yon faint rustle in the neighbour copse  
 Be stealthy weasel treading last year's leaves.  
 With staff in hand and girded loins he feeds  
 Restlessly in a posture of defence ;  
 And yet those years were heaven for all the  
 note

Of wanton, half-luxurious, boding mazed  
 With their calm joy, only enhancing it  
 By discord gentle, tinging every thought,  
 Concentrating the soul upon her love  
 As transient and fleeting like the flush  
 Of sunrise. Ah! 'twas sweet in those bright  
 days

For them to sit, the lovers, hand in hand,  
 He like the breath of spring to her gum-bud  
 Of sprouting mind, teaching her many things,  
 And opening her sweet being at his will,  
 To blow a flower of rarest scent for all!  
 These are a few songs fragrant with his bliss  
 That floated from him on the summer air.

## IN HAVEN

No more shrill whistling 'mid the spars;  
 No black masts reeling 'mong the stars  
 Point to them as they go and come,  
 We labouring o'er the waste of foam.

I waken to a glorious dawn,  
 Calm floating through unruffled morn  
 In a sweet breathing wooded bay  
 Upon a rosy sea of day.

'Tis no ideal vision we raise  
 In Fancy's faëry coloured blaze;  
 Nor faint flame kindled as we breathe  
 On ashes of the Past in death.

Though men aver but spirit gleam  
 Of Hope and Memory may redeem  
 Life's pain and life's monotony,  
 We taste joy's essence ere we die!

Your mind's high vision may be rare,  
 Your soul's dreamed mistress passing fair;  
 Yet, brothers, are they something pale:  
 Perchance those simple girl-flowers that veil

Their fragrant loveliness in shade  
 Or taller growths from careless tread  
 And skyward gazers might unfold  
 A life of *God's* ideal mould—

Fresh from his hand in bounty sown  
 On this our earth: life sacred own;  
 Its mysteries; and most its love:  
 We witness, darling, as we prove!

## HOME

Of riding o'er a gentle rise,  
 I pause the landscape to survey,  
 While frosty dew to half-shut eyes  
 Weave webs of light in jewel play:  
 A floating gleam  
 Of elfin beam  
 In hoar grasstufts where the gossamers  
 dream.

Tall trees with bronzy budded sprays  
 Embroider fine the liquid blue;  
 Whose shadows stream to softer maze  
 As brimming o'er and sinking through  
 The sunned champaign,  
 K ne-gleaming plain,  
 Fields, hamlets, woods, in vaporous wane.

Yon hollow lies of all most fair:  
 A languid wreath of lawny smoke  
 Luxuriates in lucid air  
 O'er clustered elm, the haunt of rook,  
 From nestled farm  
 Homelike and warm  
 Aloof from men and all their harm.

For there at household tasks my life  
 Moves singing blithe as any bird  
 With whose brown nests our eaves are rife  
 That in the fresh May-dawn is stirred—  
 Dawns which illumine  
 Those folds of spume  
 That curtain frail our beamy room.

We hear yon thresher's measured beat,  
 We see the glancing of the flail,  
 Farm voices cheery rousing greet,  
 Each milkmaid bears her bubbling pail.  
 Soon where we sleep  
 Your rose will creep,  
 And early will your flowers peep.

Joy's essence, all my spirit prays,  
 I hold though I believed it not:  
 So life's long dark bewildering ways  
 Sloped down towards this primrose spot!  
 Spill, leaves unrolled!  
 Our petals fold  
 Pressed close upon their heart of gold!

Is this the whole? to seek our joy,  
 And finding sink to mere content—  
 No social aims our powers employ,  
 In a boundless human firmament?  
 Nay in a well,  
 Both deep and still,  
 Hoard love that all may drink their fill!

All bliss, how pure soe'er, must die;  
 For this untasted must I throw  
 My life in dust? for shadows sigh?  
 Nay, drain its brief yet generous flow!  
 Love makes us more  
 With all the store  
 Of other lives, sole conqueror!

If aught survive it should be love,  
 That blends us with the heart of things;  
 But if in death no spirit move,  
 Alone life's subtle aroma springs  
 From delicate cells  
 Where love indwells:  
 Ah! guard it from the winter spells!

For calmly sleep our azure seas:  
 And yet from far there seems to breathe  
 Anon, as warning, some chill breeze  
 From wandering iceberg, white with death—  
 'The dull world's ill,  
 Chance frosts which kill,  
 And worst, my own dark spirit's chill!

Fold close, more close, the present bliss:  
 You gaze abroad—behold, 'tis gone;  
 Nay, thoughts ne'er wander even to this—  
 Bask in the glory, every one!  
 Nor wonder pale  
 How soon the trail  
 Of yon vast shade shall make it fail!

As when upon a summer day  
 We wandering down some woodland vale  
 Hear a sweet voice from far away  
 So clear, so sweet, our spirits fail  
 To tell its birth,  
 Of heaven or earth,  
 Dropt by some angel in his mirth,

Who dips these crystal days anear—  
 Such seems our love: O thrilling voice,  
 Intent I lean; I stand all ear;  
 Hand raised to banish alien noise;  
 My soul drinks in  
 Bliss-shimmering keen  
 Each quavering line of your music rain!

Die not, O voice, into the blue  
 You well from: scent of blossomed spring  
 On delicate airs, I faint with you:  
 Slide not from their too wanton wing!  
 Kind spirits, alight;  
 With hands flushed white  
 Shade my one flame from breath of night.

## THE DESTROYER

Our clasp too firm for aught to sever,  
 I swore to hold thee, love, for ever,  
 Last height of all my life's endeavour!

A child may laughing homeward run,  
 With snow-wreath frail hands closed upon,  
 But opening them he finds it gone!

I press thee close, I feel thine hand;  
 My spirit can, nor will, command  
 A thought that in this lovelit land,

Within the heart of ferns and flowers,  
 That mantle round these feet of ours,  
 A subtle exhalation cowers,

To breathe unseen a fatal breath,  
 And sure, though slowly, to unwreath  
 Locked hands that would not loose till death.

Yet lurks miasma in the air,  
 However seeming pure and fair,  
 For tainted spirits everywhere.

And we, foam-globes the sunlight strews  
 With iridescent moment hues,  
 While to the flood new strength accrues!

My child, must our sweet love go by?  
 We foambeards fleeting, you and I?  
 Ah! turn we now with tearful eye

To that Divine Man who alone  
 Stream taintless from the spring bath flown,  
 Who feels the Father's will his own;

And so his name as Saviour gave,  
 In teaching faith and love shall save  
 And bloom their full beyond the grave!

For long our holiday extends,  
 It seems when first we visit friends  
 Beloved, but all too soon it ends!

So brief the life of holiest mirth,  
For what to us this teeming earth,  
If love's cold ashes choke the hearth?

And since 'tis gloaming infinite  
All round our solitary light,  
What end would thy desire invite?

—That when the shadows nearer press  
From forth the outer loneliness—  
If they could make love's watchfire less,

Till we numb cowering, even we!  
Half-vacant note the encroaching grey  
On those red brands—it ne'er can be!

Or as we two love's vigil keep,  
If unaware night's fingers creep  
About *one* heart to still its leap—

We leaning close might nestle so  
O'er *both* the numbing night must flow:  
And so the last each soul shall know

Will be the sister spirit nigh,  
What last swims near each filming eye  
The one dear face—and so to die!

Then if below the ghostly rim  
There lives a day that grows not dim,  
We trample on the boast of Time!

If one had stayed, that friendly art  
Accurst might soothe and heal—and part—  
But now we go locked heart to heart!

Ah, rave not, poor blind human pride!  
For is not Love Divine the guide?  
Come, let us kneel then side by side!

#### EVENING PRAYER

##### I

Now the soft warm gleam uncertain  
In the little chamber stays,  
On the spotless falling curtain,  
By the bedside where she prays:  
From the shadow round her kneeling  
Slender hands are raised appealing.

##### II

Down below the shadow resteth,  
O'er blush-alabaster feet,  
Simple robe of white investeth  
Up to where bows, childlike sweet,  
Gentle head in hands half hidden,  
Whence the shadow falls forbidden.

##### III

From our dusk her hands are lifting,  
And the light, in answer bland,  
Down her sleek brown tresses drifting,  
Seems to smooth them with a hand—  
Solemn hand from forth the splendour,  
Where this child hath those that tend her!

##### IV

These love-tears may cloud my vision;  
Yet about this humble room  
Do not faces dim, Elysian,  
Yearn down o'er her through the gloom?  
Even the shades are glory colder,  
Warming softer as they fold her!

##### V

So bathe her feet our earth's chill sorrow,  
Never cling more dark than this;  
From her gentle spirit borrow  
Even the hues and warmth of bliss,  
While her soul inhales the heaven,  
Praying thus at morn and even!

##### VI

Her, life's darling pilgrim hailleth;  
Mountain forest, haunted nook,  
As on high serene she saileth,  
Smile beneath her sainted look!  
Only worldlings, foul in feeling,  
Curse the childlike light revealing.

##### VII

Spirit music, souls of flowers,  
Here luxuriate to shape,  
Charming far the baleful powers:  
Blessed moment, wherefore 'scape?  
Hold her young, so griefless praying,  
Hold these tranqed eyes from straying!

## BOOK II

CLEMENT and Beatrice had often planned,  
If circumstance should ever set them free,  
That they would seek a dwelling in the south  
Where childish years of each had danced  
away,

Two drops that sparkle waxing side by side,  
Unwitting they shall tremble into one.  
And now the very nook that they had found,  
Seeking sweet solitude wherein to nurse  
Their new-born joy in crescent honeymoon,  
They seek again, a vain experiment  
Too oft—for either we ourselves have  
changed,

Ourselves most mutable of mortal things,  
Or memory's cherished home looks alien.  
But Beatrice and Clement loved as then,  
And that fair nook seemed waiting their return.

Whitely it gleamed as in a verdure-nest,  
Their villa, with its vases aloë-crowned  
And shutters green to keep it cool within,  
'Mid oranges and lemon-trees that crowd  
Here by the margin of the dark blue sea,  
A gem within a bloomy fold of hills  
Where they with silver fringe the azure wave.  
So Clement saw it from the castled rock  
Where homeward faring reined he in the steed  
For eyes athirst in peace to drink the view ;  
For here the little villa first appears  
To one who journeys westward by the coast,  
Even as did Clement, called into the north  
To England now three moons and more ago,  
While circumstance forbade that Beatrice  
Should follow him but forced her to remain.  
He having suffered in the interval  
Much pain and much perplexity in mind  
Full wearily returned, desiring her  
Whose presence on his troubled heart should  
fall

As fanning air upon a burning brow.

No path, I think, in all fair Italy  
Is lovelier than the path that led him here,  
Meandering through olives old and huge  
Oaklike in girth, of gnarled cavern-bole

And hoary leaves, varied with ilexes,  
Carüb of glossy leaf, and iris flower  
That seems to fleck with colour from the sea  
These mountain-groves—how often climbing  
high

Up yon grey rock beneath an olive's shade  
By some clear rivulet those lovers lay,  
And peered for hours into the flickering blue  
That starlike winked among the leaves ; or  
leaning

Upon their elbows, vague athwart the sea  
(Soft salvia-blue immersed in hazy light)  
Dream-gazing, lay upon the mountain-thyme  
And rosemary and mint that scent soft airs  
Around them, soothed with humming of the  
bee,

Sipping cool oranges luxurious,  
With all their past spread indistinct behind,  
The sad and happy in the lives of each,  
The rough ways and the smooth ways in  
their lives,

Like some far landscape from a pleasant  
height,

All lovely in the summer light of love !  
Or else he read to her the glowing strain  
Of Petrarch: they were rapt into the heavens,  
Whirled panting in the awful seraph flight  
Of Dante to the feet of Beatrice,  
Or solemn thrilled at his lament for her—  
But oft some kindred feeling in the tale  
Disturbed the eyes of each, fusing their beams  
In one another's fervid labyrinths,  
Then like to those whose love that poet sings  
How tenderly ! "that day they read no more."

On this runs Clement's thought in riding  
slow

Through those old olives winding low anon  
Where cornflag flushes all the vivid grass  
With purple-pink, and oranges like lamps  
Light all the groves, while through slim  
almond leaves

And figs and planes the ripple of the sea  
Soft lightens momentarily at every plash  
Of dozing undulations as they wake.  
Then down upon a little open bight  
Of shining shingle fringing a ravine,  
Lit by a mountain streamlet mantled o'er

Of maidenhair and limber leaves and flowers,  
Wends devious the path, and circles now  
An open headland whence the rock appears,  
Beyond the bay, of castled Monaco.  
A peasant here the happy rider met  
Driving his donkey with a cask of wine  
Slung either side, a dull red stain about  
Its mouth and cork : the sunburnt stalwart  
man

With raven hair, dark eyes, and olive skin,  
One of the ancient race Ligurian,  
Was wont to greet him very cheerily ;  
For he was one of those the lovers twain  
In evenings cool before their frugal meal  
Would visit often in the humble homes,  
Finding true friends among these peasant-  
folk,

While ministering to them in their need.  
But Clement fancied, after pleased surprise  
The man had manifested as they met,  
His face had strangely clouded, and a ruth  
Made soft his eyes and saddened in his voice.  
He wondered for a while, yet little heeding  
Skirted the bay and, singing to himself  
When none were nigh, he pictured the  
beloved

So near his now, the dress that she may  
wear,

Most like of muslin blue and white—this hour  
She may be in the garden with her book  
Or at her evening meal on rustic table  
Beneath cool umbrage of two limber planes,  
As far from the blue sea as in a wood  
A startled bird may flit from twig to twig.

“Here may she gaze athwart the infinite  
To where blue sky and ocean marrying  
blend,

As I have seen, with eyes more infinite  
Mysterious than they, while shadowy hands  
Glide from the foliage over her to stroke  
Her grace of soft brown hair how daintily,  
And her soft shoulders gleaming through  
the gauze,

Or envious invade the basking glow  
On gentle undulation of a breast  
Tender as petals of an opening rose.  
But yet I think she listens anxiously  
For a far tramp of horse ; my letter told

That many days ago I should be here :  
Maybe she fears mishap and pines for me,  
My own soul's life—a minute only, love,  
And you lie folded to my beating heart !  
And then what bliss our parchèd eyes shall  
draw  
And draw and draw from one another's  
wells,  
Until we leave them for the dewy mouth  
And suck it thence and never speak the  
while,  
Unless with utterance broken rare and low !”

But as he nears the house, he notices  
With wonder that the shutters green are  
closed

Both in the upper and the lower rooms,  
Though 'tis near sunset, and in afternoons  
This eastern-facing side is shadowy cool :  
And Beatrice neglects not homely care  
For ordering details of daily life  
Which smooth and make it pleasant unaware.  
But coming to the garden-wall he thinks  
She may have heard his horse and meet him  
there ;

Yet is there no one—riding through the gate  
His eye explores dim spaces 'mid the trees,  
And peering to the spot between the planes,  
As he had visioned her, it seems that she  
Is sitting there indeed with look intent  
Upon the sunset flush in sea and sky.  
His heart leaps up, he calls her name aloud ;  
Then rising slow she turns to him, her face  
Looks wan when he discerns it nearing her,  
For all the evening flush, and wistful eyes  
Suffused and sorrowful are hers, with arms  
Stretched eager open to him, while her lips  
Move white and tremulous with ne'er a  
sound,

Until a fig-tree baulks him of the sight.  
He with a sudden faintness at his heart  
Bounds past the trees and flings him to the  
ground,

But finds her not, and leaving loose the horse  
Plunges among thick fig-leaves seeking her.  
In vain—he finds no traces of her nigh ;  
So he emerges calling anxiously  
And peering everywhere ; no Beatrice !

Then stands bewildered ; she was here but  
now ;

It could be no illusion of the sense !  
Some ghastly dread has whispered in his ear,  
And pale mechanical he draws the steed  
(So quiet cropping dim delicious grass)  
Toward the house, till with alacrity  
A groom appears, and bowing to his lord,  
That selfsame look of pity on his face,  
The peasant wore, arrests the eager words  
On Clement's questioning lips and keeps  
him mute.

With mute interrogation in his eyes  
A moment, straight he hurries to the house,  
And fumbles at the door as he were blind,  
Enters the room where she is wont to sit  
To find it empty, rapid mounts the stair  
To their own chamber—yet she may be nigh,  
Strolling this evening not expecting him !  
The little things that ever speak of her  
Unto his heart are there ; the needlework,  
The thimble and the workbox are below,  
A tiny stocking knitted by her hand  
For some poor neighbour's babe, the needle  
in it,

Half-finished on the table, and her book  
Open at yon window flutters in the air.  
While yet he strove to reason foreboding down  
Too vainly stole her favourite maiden nigh,  
And she was weeping, weeping bitterly.  
Then Clement sickened, faltering "Where is  
she ?"

But she wept on, till hoarsely "Tell me  
quick !"

He whispered ; so she glanced at him and  
sobbed,

As she beheld his ghastly waning face,  
"She is not dead : oh no, she is alive !"  
At this the blood congesting at his heart  
Flowed free again—"he carried her away."  
"Who ? what ? who carried her away ? ex-  
plain !"

But choked with tears and he so vehement  
She could not utter more.

And now a touch,

Such a soft touch, upon his shoulder grows.  
He turns and with displeased astonishment

Beholds a dame he knows alas ! too well.  
Some sorrow looks from her fair countenance,  
And some affection, tenderness for him.  
Yet Clement at the sight of her and touch  
Felt as might feel a wild-bird darting glad  
Unto his home, and peering through the dusk  
Of brushwood for the downy streaked head  
Of his soft mate upon the lichen edge  
Of their hidden nest and watching on their  
eggs,

As such a bird might feel beholding there  
A smooth gorged serpent coiling in her stead.  
"Do *you* know, madam, anything of this ?"  
He questioned ; she "Believe my sympathy  
How deep for you ; be only calm, and I  
Will tell you all I know of what has chanced."  
She motioned him into a chamber near,  
He following like some automaton.  
"You wonder I am here—not long ago  
I came alone, and she invited me  
As friend of yours to spend much pleasant  
time

Here in her company, and often I  
Returned her courtesy and asked her home.  
It chanced a traveller whom I had known  
In former days, was passing in a yacht,  
And came ashore ; we met him in our  
walks—

Ah ! had I known the man's true char-  
acter—

A fascinating man the women think,  
Noble and wealthy ; often afterward  
He went to her—I never thought of fear :  
She often said she longed for your return,  
And wondered at your silence every day.  
How full she relished her converse with him  
I well could see, yet never till by chance  
(Now you must nerve yourself to hear the  
whole)

I came one day she did not look for me  
Did I suspect the terrible fatal truth ;  
But then I saw them sitting side by side,  
And in his toying hand hers passive lying."  
With this the lady's radiant lissome hand  
Slid into his and pre-sed it as for ru'h,  
And her wild hungry eye stole seeking his ;  
But he, as if the contact blistered him  
Like vitriol, snatched violent his hand,

And rising suddenly confronted her  
 Black as a storm with loathing and with scorn,  
 And hissed the syllables "You know you lie!"  
 She cowering, collapsing in dismay,  
 Died all the languid longing in her eyes  
 That filled with baleful greenish livid light  
 As cats' in darkness, and the pleasant lines  
 Of her faint-smiling mouth set rigidly  
 About the close thin lips, while fingers  
 clutched

Clawlike her seat, until she seemed a lynx  
 That draws itself together for a spring.  
 "Maybe you'll ask your servants if I lie,"  
 After a pause half-audibly she breathed.  
 "My servants! ask my servants if the sun  
 Did tumble in my absence from the sky!  
 Lady, I know you—and I know my wife.  
 You may have loved me as 'tis given to such  
 As you to love: I knew you not of yore.  
 You loved; yet not like young romantic girls,  
 Yourself confessed, but with sobriety  
 You poised your love against i' the other scale  
 A higher title, ampler wealth and power,  
 Carriage and footmen, richer jewellery,  
 As 'tis the wont of women in the world,  
 And even though weighted with my rank  
 and blood,

Your poor light love flew upward with a  
 jerk!

Inevitably such a flimsy thing  
 Must waver here and there with every gust  
 And every fetid vapour of the sense.  
 But she—I pray you mark the difference!—  
 She was, you know, 'a young romantic  
 girl,'

Her love was love, no flimsy counterfeit,  
 Base spawn of wanton fancy, vanity,  
 But love—the power you creatures of the  
 world

Are doomed to mock and never comprehend.  
 With her, the wealth of continents and seas,  
 The social pinnacle, a monarch's throne,  
 Were but an airy cobweb in the scale  
 To wrench the almighty magnet-hold of  
 love!

It cannot be: I know my Beatrice."

So then the lady, livid with her rage,  
 Sidled from near him rising to her feet,

And spake with choking accents low and quick:  
 "A most sublime tirade, I thank you for it  
 And for your good opinion; as for her,  
 I only know this model saint of yours,  
 This poet's ideal of love and constancy,  
 This faithful though insipid peasant-girl,  
 Has left you—left you—for a vicious duke.  
 I saw them—saw them—row away myself,  
 And your sweet paragon was in his arms!"  
 With that she broke into hysteric cries,  
 Half choking sobs and half hyena laugh,  
 For bitter jealousy, and vanity  
 And lacerated love turned into gall;  
 But at the last word when she mentioned *him*,  
 The man who stole his Beatrice away,  
 The pitiless sneer that Clement wore for her  
 In her unlovely disappointed mood  
 Passed into a concentrate look of hate  
 Slow-fed with blackness like a thundercloud,  
 And though he glowered into her very eyes,  
 No more his vision pictured facing him  
 The woman fair with passion hideous.  
 Anon he muttered talking with himself,  
 "When in the life-blood of his quivering heart  
 These hands have revelled, I shall die  
 content."

Whether the lady fainted on the floor,  
 Or at her leisure smoothed her ruffled plumes,  
 He never knew, for turning on his heel,  
 Abrupt he left her, striding through the hall  
 Into the garden, up the rock, away.

Onward he strode and chose the steepest  
 parts

Of the abrupt grey rock, as driven aloft  
 By the fierce tumult of his boiling blood.  
 He ever chose the giddiest mountain-tracks,  
 Haunt of shy marmot and of ibex wild,  
 That he with soul unquailing might surprise  
 The secret of soliloquies sublime.

Nature, the ancient mother, murmurs far  
 From human presences in craggy haunt  
 Of cormorant and eagle, by lone springs  
 Of mighty rivers bubbling into light.  
 Now the tumultuous anguish of his soul  
 Urged him instinctively to drown its roar  
 By conjuring a counter-tempest forth,  
 Born of unwonted effort physical.

In part his purpose was to find a friend  
 Who dwelt upon the rock, a peasant he,  
 Intelligent and cultured ; not a man  
 Born in the country, but a mountaineer  
 From Corsica, who left his native hills  
 Craving adventurous to see the world,  
 Embarked a sailor lad from Genoa,  
 And after many years the crew discharged,  
 Wandered along the coast to Monaco ;  
 And here, for all proud sniffing of the air  
 Of independence, he was brought to bay  
 By large dark eyes, and clearest olive skin,  
 By a neat cotton print tied round the chin,  
 Blue woollen stocking covering ankles trim.  
 The father of the girl, an only child,  
 Owned a small cottage and a strip of rock  
 Which his forefathers with their strong right  
 arms

Had scooped and terraced, digging spacious  
 tanks

For irrigation through the summer drought,  
 Then planted with the delicate lemon-tree.  
 Aloft they lived, but he would do at times  
 Some sardine fishing in the breezy dawn  
 With his own boat, for oft he wistful eyed  
 His old well-loved free perilous salt sea.  
 Now a full year his darling child lay ill,  
 The stay of his old age, a maiden sweet,  
 Whose mother he had buried many years,  
 And when nor Beatrice nor Clement came  
 Their way, the father would himself descend  
 To carry wine and strengthening food for  
 her

The maiden sick ; till he and Clement  
 grew

Fast friends, and roamed the hills in company  
 Searching for plants and holding high con-  
 verse.

To this old man (whose name was Paoli)  
 Instinctive Clement turned, for since he went  
 (As Beatrice related when she wrote)  
 Down daily to the villa, he would know  
 Something of this dark horror that had  
 chanced.

And then he craved some sterling sympathy ;  
 And yet the track he chose led far away  
 From the old man's home into the solitudes,  
 For solitude he needed most of all.

At length exhausted prone he flung himself  
 Upon a ledge above a precipice,  
 Sinking among sweet thyme and rosemary,  
 And ling half russet girt with myrtle bushes  
 And lentisk, while the overhung grey rock  
 That seemed to swoon and fall through azure  
 air

Was festooned with a succulent-leaved plant  
 That bore bright crimson cactus-like wee  
 flowers.

This and the spurgewort, and the velvet bees  
 Backing from out the bulging foxglove bells  
 And shaggy goat that clung with sharp-cleft  
 hoof

Of close-set nervous legs to naked crag,  
 All this he saw and noted in his mind,  
 When his breath came and when the tide of  
 blood

Less violently thumped within his head—  
 Saw too the wine-empurpled promontories  
 Dim set in ocean hues like flower petals  
 Where azure melts to purple unaware,  
 And grape-bloomed gorges of the folding  
 hills ;

While nor near cricket nor the croaking frog  
 From distant tank could vex the stilly eve.  
 Yet though he saw, yea, noted in his mind,  
 The formless ghastly trouble writhed within,  
 And rustled in dusk corners of his heart ;  
 Anon awakened, and emerging slow  
 With hideous lineaments confronted him.  
 Stunned, sickened for a moment, wildered  
 thoughts

Came trooping to their banner at his call—  
 To find her—rescue—that immediately,  
 This very night, without a thought of rest,  
 And to inflict a righteous punishment  
 On him who dared insult the sacred shrine  
 Where his soul worships and his life keeps  
 guard—

Light deepens round that purpose prominent.

Now as he nears the cottage of his friend,  
 The old man sitting on a low stuccoed wall,  
 Whence rise white pillars trellised at the top  
 And roofed with vine-leaf, at his cottage  
 door

Espies him coming ; to the vine-walk's end

Straight walks to meet him, and approach-  
ing nigh

Puts out two hands, and Clement's hand in his  
Clasps tight with such a look upon his face,  
Clement beholding need not ask "You know?"  
With wan lips nervous twitching, for he sees  
The kind old man knows all; mechanical  
He speaks the words to set emotion free  
Whose flood in silence overwhelmingly  
Boils up and strains the flood-gates of the  
heart.

"Yes, I know all," deep tremulous tones reply,  
As if the old sailor were the father himself  
Clement had alienated by his love.

Firm-lined and clean-cut are the features  
grand

Of that old man, with venerable grey hair  
Beneath the pouch red woollen that he wears  
Like other peasants; but he looks a rock  
Of granite lofty and majestic reared,  
That fronts through all the years with coun-  
tenance

Calm equable irradiation deep  
Of zenith-blue intense full-saturate  
With undulated sunlight smiles of God;  
Anon the smother of his thundercloud,  
Scathe of his lightning, lashing of his rain,  
Hounded of that wild huntsman the shrill  
wind,

Blister of frost and rasping of keen ice:  
A countenance calm, equable, yet scarred  
And weather-stained with rough experience.  
But kindliness, a mellow charity,  
Beamed from the window of his clear grey  
eye:

Life had not petrified or curdled sour  
The sweet and gracious juices of his breast.  
Turned the fine edge of his inner sense,  
Widening experience of human spirits,  
And of his own, responsive to the play  
Of varied circumstance, his views of men  
Rendered elastic, large, and pitiful.  
The ennobling humanising influences  
Of that sublime creed he was nurtured in  
His soul assimilated, little harmed  
Of elements that puff rank bigotry.

"Mayhap," he spake, "'twill be more  
pleasant here

Sitting without than in my darksome hut.  
Are you fresh come, or know you all that  
passed?"

But Clement, about whose heart the casing ice  
Was thawing in the rays of sympathy,  
Could scarcely utter—covering his face  
He strove to choke down not unmanly tears.  
The old man's eyes were swimming too with  
mist,

But the youth faltered how but now arrived  
He knew the bare fact only, seeking here  
For detail deeming that his friend might  
know.

This foreign duke cast anchor, Paoli told,  
With a large yacht about a month ago  
Early one placid morning near the shore:  
The lady fine new-settled in a villa  
And he appeared inseparable friends.

"He was a scoundrel with a narrow brain  
Who held himself quite irresistible;  
Among the women whom he herded with  
Mayhap had proved it so; in higher types  
Of woman disbelieved, but he had spoken  
(Her maid, a faithful creature, told me this)  
Had looked and spoken as ill became a man  
With a pure child who scarce believed in  
wrong.

From then her mistress vaguely dreaded  
him;

Yet when he asked both ladies to the yacht,  
She, nothing doubting since her feigning  
friend

Would go with her, consented freely, glad  
To see a ship all praised as beautiful.

But when next morning the duke came  
ashore,

The woman came not—never meant to  
come—

To meet her as was settled on the strand.  
The traitor urged her waiting 'neath the  
shade

Of the boat's awning, for the sun was fierce;  
And in a moment at a sign from him  
(So a mate told me) they had shoved the  
boat

Off from the shingle, and he heard her call  
Loud but in vain for them to wait her friend;  
None answering, the villain took his seat

Close at her side and strove to seize her hand,  
 She edging off and crying to return.  
 The yacht weighed anchor, and a stiff nor'-  
 wester

Scarce felt in here, but fresh away from land,  
 Sped her that evening far toward Corsica."

"In Corsica? is that where I must go?"  
 Clement broke in with husky tone abrupt,  
 Clutching the word as lying in ambush for it.  
 —"In Corsica," old Paoli resumed,  
 "This man—a Frenchman—owns a castle  
 vast.

There from the gossip of his crew I gather  
 He must have taken her—this only chanced  
 Four days ago—I deem the woman far  
 More guilty than the man in this affair,  
 The friend professed—I know not if I err.  
 But for her motive, that I cannot guess."  
 "Him I can deal with," Clement answered  
 slow,

"How with a woman? she preferred the gold  
 To me, but deemed that she could have me  
 too—

On her own terms and when the fancy came.  
 She thought me weak and plastic in her  
 hands,

Docile to take the shape her lust might  
 crave,

No more rebellious to her fingers lithe  
 Than would be ductile clay that she might  
 mould.

So she had found men, so appraised me  
 From superficial signs ambiguous,  
 Nor guessed the human clay she paddled in  
 Yielded because itself found yielding sweet;  
 But let her twist the tame lump otherwise,  
 As if a blade lurked hidden in the mass,  
 'Twould cut her wanton fingers to the bone.  
 I deemed sweet daily suns and tender  
 showers

And many dewy moons of intercourse  
 Had mellowed juiciest friendship-fruits in  
 her,

But lo! on peering through the lavish leaves  
 The fruit showed green and acrid as at first!  
 She told me her deliberate thought of me,  
 And it was shallow and ungenerous.

But she inspired, I deem, her precious friend  
 With her own erring estimate of me—

The worse for his facile credulity!

She could not fancy I could ever love  
 Any but her—once looking in her face—

'Twas pique that drove me to another's arms!

Let her appear and beckon me away,

Let her but hint the other unworthy me,

And I should drop at her least finger-brush,

Drop eager in her lap, how cheaply won!

What punishment could I devise for her,

A woman? I could never hurt a woman

Weak in her flesh—not even if my love

Were false to me—she must be left alone

With her own meaner choice and with her  
 shame.

This one I leave to her own scorpion tail

Of vanity turned inward on herself,

Cramped in her own small soul for ever—  
 more—

That's punishment enough, methinks, for  
 her—

But not for him, a man can deal with man."

"What can you do? what would you do?"  
 replied

Paoli gravely, "think of saving *her*;

And you may save her, win her back to you

Ere thrice again yon sinking sun had set

To lie upon your heart, and I can help!"—

"Yes, tell me, now at once I start to snatch

My all from him and stretch him 'neath her  
 feet,

His place—his own—whence he has dared  
 to stir

With heart profane, for I was out of sight,

The coward; since he would not stoop for  
 awe

Justice cries out that he must grovel dead!"—

"Nay, calm yourself, beloved friend of mine,"

Answered the old man, "leave him to our God

The sole avenger—for what gain were yours

In this man's death? What more should  
 you desire

Than her salvation? She awaits you now

And longs for her deliverer: what gain

To her or you the slaying of the man?

So you would only with infatuate hand

Stretch dead for ever your reviving joy  
Even at the wondrous moment it emerged  
Scarce hoped-for from the shadow of the tomb.

Blood must be on your consciences if law  
Hunted you not nor ran you down at last :  
If you must punish there are courts of law ;  
Cite there the man as public enemy."

"Prate not of law, my friend," replied the youth,

"To me on fire with my most righteous hate,  
Who nothing am if not one parching thirst  
For one heart's blood—not injury to *me*,  
But her whom God committed unto me,  
His dearest, tenderest, loveliest child among  
The children likest, nearest to Himself,  
Her wrong in thunder-tones God bids  
avenge ;

And if I shrink, how clear myself to Him ?  
It is her cause, not mine, it is the cause  
Of God her Father : in your holy books  
Where do you read 'tis sinful to avenge  
A lamb that Heaven has laid upon your  
breast,

Lent you awhile and trusted to your care ?  
Nay, doth not Christ affirm who toucheth  
these

Toucheth the very apple of God's eye ?  
Avengers are the ministers of God !  
Let them but merge their puny selves and  
wrongs

In that vocation awful and sublime,  
Strong will their stroke be, calm and terrible.  
Prate not of law to me—it is an age  
I know of reason and expediency,  
When dearest friends respectable and smooth  
Mine, countermine, beneath each other's feet,  
And sell their souls for shameful homage men  
Paid once to virtue, now to liveries ;  
Age when a man is fool to trust his brother  
Yet dares not swindled clutch him by the  
throat,

When if one should behold before his eyes  
A mother strangled or a wife abused,  
With judgment cool far-seeing he would  
stroll

Inquiring *where* to find a magistrate !

Unfearing now you may insult a man,  
Unfearing too you may insult his friend—  
The barbarous dark age of honour dead.  
How should men start and shudder now to  
hear  
Such names as liar, knave, applied to them,  
When they have nigh forgotten that knavery  
And lies are base and very loathsome  
things,

How prudent and respectable soe'er  
And orthodox in creeds a man may be  
To keep well with society and God ?  
Ah ! dare we babbling foul the holy name  
Of Christ, the wise, the world-embracing  
heart,

And his forgiveness of his enemies ?  
Dare we invest our native squalor with  
The fair word-raiment which of old He wore,  
And mimicking his accents and his gait  
Turn that divinest faith beneath the sun  
Into the byword of all honest men !"

And then he argued, as concerning fact,  
That since the wrong was done in Italy  
And Corsica was French, the traitor there  
Was sheltered from the clutches of the law.  
For his own safety, what was that to him ?  
Yet must he leave her in the world alone,  
Nor taste again some hallowed life with her ?  
Two years were theirs, two years of paradise,  
Envied of angels in the fadeless bowers,  
And they are thankful for them and rejoice—  
Yet who may sip the nectar-cup of gods,  
Nor passionately long to sip again ?  
"Therefore my safety if I rescue her  
Is something to me—otherwise 'tis nought,  
Less, less than nought !"

"Vengeance belongs to God,  
He will repay," the other solemnly ;  
"But I will freely tell you what I know  
About your hope of safety where you go.  
Among my countrymen there yet prevails  
Alas ! a sentiment much like to yours,  
The which has borne a monstrous crimson  
fruit,  
Blood-feud (as such a seed must ever bear)  
Through ages, curse of my fair island home.

That is a fire which smoulders even yet :  
 Our rulers could not stamp the embers out.  
 Your mission known the natives would assist  
 And shield you to the utmost of their skill,  
 Yet for success you need to know the spot  
 And people of the place, and who can help.  
 You take the steamer with the other folk  
 In travelling thither ; but my brother owns  
 A tight felucca, and will lend it me  
 If weather smile for our secret return.  
 His home is in the town upon the coast  
 Nearest the castle on the rock above.  
 A year ago moreover in the house,  
 Full trusted by the owner of it, lived  
 My distant kinsman but my nearest friend.  
 His incorruptible true-ringing heart  
 Will in such enterprise be all our own  
 If yet he dwell there ; he can help within."  
 "Then I may count on you," Clement ex-  
 claimed,  
 Seizing the old man's hand impulsively.  
 "On one condition," was the grave reply,  
 "Forego your wild scheme of revenge and  
 think  
 Only of saving her"—

"Impossible !

I cannot do it—anything but this—  
 Remember you are old and I am young.  
 The traitor moved no hand against your love  
 But against mine—if you were in my place !  
 A boor with human nature if his king  
 Have fouled it wanton, spat i' the face of it,  
 His loyalty engrained like hair aflame  
 Shrivels to thin air suddenly, and he  
 Yields his left cheek most meekly, his mere  
 life,  
 Up unto him who smote him on the right,  
 The cheek of honour, trod on her he loves,  
 Meek yields his all—if only—mark the if !  
 The chance be granted him to plunge and  
 twist

To agitate the blade in that false heart  
 And lap its warm blood oozing to the haft.  
 And I am not a boor—my blood more rich  
 And ancient than yon duke's for all his gold,  
 Got foully as I think, and puff-ball title  
 His sire crawled all his life about the dust

Of a king's ante-room between the legs  
 Of courtiers, a live footstool for the king,  
 To wheedle from him, a mere fellowman !  
 The blood of monarchs and of nobles mine  
 Who led the advancing vanguard of their  
 time,

A noble myself, nor without hope to grave  
 My old ancestral name upon the age  
 With thought of rarer temper than the wont.  
 But since my peers are fallen with other folk  
 Upon their face before the golden god  
 Set with acclaim of nations and with clash  
 Of all fair music in the world's high place—  
 Set up for worship by the prince of it—  
 And I alas ! have scant rich offerings  
 To offer like my equals to the god,  
 Not even a daughter's heart, most dainty gift  
 A parent can lay quivering at his feet,  
 I walk apart in deep obscurity  
 Confronting not the jeer of jingling fools.  
 And me—for I am poor nor much frequent  
 Their fashionable foolings, gatherings—  
 This duke from them invades—for who  
 am I ?

Not less by birth, yet weighed and wanting  
 found

I' the loaded scales of his society !  
 What if he swoop upon a pauper's wife  
 This gaudy jay—the woman should rejoice,  
 Nor could the man complain ; or doth the  
 mate  
 Of yon meek finch the ravenous kite hath  
 mauled  
 Complain, or will the gorging tyrant hear ?  
 And so he pounced upon my one ewe-lamb !  
 She was my all, and I have nothing now ;  
 Nothing but my revenge ; and yet you bid,  
 Yet you bid me fling my revenge away !  
 Is that your meaning ? I would touch it  
 firm ;  
 Can that indeed be what you ask of me ?"

Then the old man : "Now hear my final  
 word.

Promise at least, that if you find she lives  
 You will not seek to kill the enemy.  
 If he have left her life, you may not take  
 His life away—or go you must alone."

Clement reluctant promised, and his friend  
Spake a few soothing solemn words to him  
About the Sufferer of sufferers  
That night He fell among the shadowy trees  
Upon His face in bitter agony  
Breathing "Not My will, but Thine own be  
done !"

Then they embraced, and under a pale  
moon  
The youth bent leaden steps towards his  
home.  
And when he enters the familiar rooms  
Almost he deems it but a hideous dream,  
And that she quiet waits him in the house  
Somewhere ; he knows not where, but to  
and fro  
Strays through each empty room, as looking  
for her

And listening for the gentle call he loves  
From somewhere nigh, yet feeling it is vain.  
Through dim moon-spaces like to one half-  
stunned

Groping his way, the servants hearing steps  
Unbidden bring him light and needed food,  
And he shakes loose the stupor to arrange  
The morrow's journey, and to order all  
For his dependents as befits the case.

Last worn and weary flings him on a couch,  
Yet cannot cease to picture his shy bird  
Tiny and timorous, cowering in the glare  
Of that foul serpent's hungry glittering eyes,  
Wistfully craving him, but in despair  
Sinking and waning deeming him afar,  
And fearing he can never find her prison.

Then schemes of vengeance boil within his  
heart,  
Fierce, incoherent, seething like a scum,  
Yet chilled anon with some vague conscious-  
ness

That he, weak-healthied, a man of inner life  
(Not this alone, yet student in the main),  
Shrank secretly through all his ravaged frame  
From striking that strong outward blow his  
soul

Roared to him as from myriad throats to  
strike.

Yet well he knows that he shall triumph here,

Once warmed with goad of some insulting  
word,

Or any opposition from the man.

His proud strong will shall guide the aspen  
hand

To deal as strong a blow as any clod.

But then the temperament too sensitive  
Seeks, finds, ally in contemplative doubt.

So drift in sight again the arguments

Of the old peasant and his own replies,

Till over-strained into a fevered doze

He falls, the spirit racked and battling still,

A chamber full of loud discordant cries.

They go as planned, and landing at the  
port

Of Bastia, they take a mountain path

Known well to Paoli along the coast.

That leads them to a village near the shore

Below the castle eyrie which they seek.

Blue as the bluest lapis-lazuli

The sea they skirt, plashing as musical

As yesterday along the Italian shore,

Listless alternating soft silences

With softer sound, as yonder bee anon

Muffles low hum in some campanula

Of nectared amethyst, and hums again.

The hawk swims high in supple shining air,

And swallows twittering dart about the cliffs,

From the Marina with its little pier

Where loll the swarthy fishers gossiping

About the windlasses, or in the shade

Of stranded boats upon the furrowed beach

Mending their nets and munching chestnut  
cakes—

Opens a valley fair, and high therein

Perches the village on a shelf of rock,

Nested in olives ; but the glen below

(A deep rich silt, plunder of flooding streams

From wealth of mountains in the winter,  
dammed

Their channel mouths unscoured of ebbing  
tides

By storm-waves piling sea-weed, shingle,  
sand)

Glow now with beaded mace-heads of the  
maize,

And simmers with a paler bearded wheat.

It is the summer calm when yesterday,  
To-day, or any days we pair together,  
Are fair twin-sisters men distinguish not.  
But yesterday the bosom of the youth  
Mirrored serenely the serenity,  
To-day it seems a hollow mask to him.

Paoli inquiring finds his sailor brother,  
From whom he learns the foreigner indeed  
Brought his sweet prize four suns and moons  
ago.

He promises a cheerful aid to them  
Whate'er betide, relating that the friend  
Staunch and leal-hearted Paoli had hoped  
To find within the castle there in sooth  
Yet dwells; the fisherman expects him here  
Anon from Bastia, but yesterday  
Thither despatched upon affairs the duke  
Would trust to none beside reluctantly,  
Since if the gossips be but well informed  
The duke to him commits the special charge  
Of his sweet captive, closest prisoner.  
A charge assumed by Giudice that so  
He might secure her safety in the den  
Of the fell robber, choking down for her  
The indignation of his faithful heart.  
The master, who has squandered far in France  
His graceless youth, trusts the integrity  
Of that stern man his father trusted well,  
Yet with the son integrity but means  
A dog's devotion to the master's whim.  
Till now his few behests indifferent  
Giudice strictly taciturn fulfils.

"But he and I and all of us around  
Are Corsican, pure Corsican, and we  
Abhor such deeds: we love your country-  
men,  
For they are freemen and have reached a  
hand

To help us in our need; moreover he  
That dukeling yonder—(here he sunk his  
tone)

Giudice was away then as I think—  
Seduced a girl, sister to one of us,  
To go with him to France and ruined her.  
So if you punish not your wrong, my lord,  
There are those here who wait to punish  
theirs.

So many sluggish and cold-blooded years  
Of foreign rule have crawled not over us,  
Thank God Almighty, chilling our hot blood,  
But our faint pulse as at a clarion call  
Leaps yet remembering Fior di Spina—she,  
Our splendid maiden with the eyes of fire,  
Who in the public market-place of Corte  
With hand unfaltering flashed the fatal shot  
That brought her faithless lover to her feet,  
Tumbled him humbled to a lump of clay!  
O'er whom our poets trolled voceros brave,  
Whom mightiest most illustrious warriors  
crowned  
Their queen in chestnut-forests of our isle!"

So voluble and vehement outspoke  
The Corsican with fiery face and eye,  
And Clement knew that he could trust the  
man.

Scarce had he ended ere stern Giudice  
Was in their midst and they the brothers  
twain

Apart conferring with him. He abrupt  
A minute after turned to Clement saying  
"I will assist you now immediately,  
The lady ails, do you but follow me."  
Well had he known remonstrating appeal  
The libertine would but exasperate  
To violence and maiming of the hand  
That could alone assist the victim there,  
And he was of the few, the very few,  
Who if a breath would loosen an avalanche  
On his own head, yet save another life,  
Would palter not but breathe that breath  
and die.

No words are spoken winding through the  
grain  
Or by the bleached stones of the torrent bed,  
Then through the *maquis*, brushwood of  
arbutus,  
Lentisk and myrtle, cytissus, rock-roses  
Cropped of rough goats or silken horned  
sheep,  
Through olives and umbrageous chestnut-  
groves  
Up the rock path, till near the castle loomed,  
Portentous pile, squat like a monster toad

Irregular and huge upon its crest,  
With rugged stones all blackened from the  
smoke

Of siege-fires in the turbulent past years,  
And chipped of bullets with abortive aim  
To silence shots from loopholes narrowing.  
And Clement dare not ask the meaning full  
Of that brief phrase "she ails"; he only  
knows

She lives, or he would not be guided here.  
But the guide pausing sharp addresses him,  
"This morning with a party of his friends  
The duke goes shooting, has already gone.  
Now I will go before you to prepare  
The execution of our project, brief  
The time I need, and yet it will be best  
You should not burst too suddenly upon her.  
Therefore I take this track that leads direct,  
While leisurely you follow me by that  
Which makes a circuit; but observe the  
tower

You must approach; she lies imprisoned  
there.

A private staircase and a private door  
Lead from it facing seaward; I dismiss  
The Frenchman guarding it and I resume  
The key entrusted to my special care:  
A rock-hewn staircase drops abruptly down,  
No window from the castle overlooks."  
Clement replied by wringing the strong hand  
And by a look, then took the devious path  
'Mong chestnut-trees and by a water-runnel,  
Making a circuit, facing the stronghold  
Anew when mounted on its proper ridge  
A half-mile to the rear of it; and here  
A precipice fell sheer one side the path  
With tumbled boulders at the base of it  
O'ergrown of bramble and snapdragon  
flowers,

While a thin burn meandered under these,  
Sparkling among the twinkling birch, anon  
Quenched in the solemn shadow of the pines.

And now he heard a sound as of men's  
voices

Approaching, often breaking to a laugh.

Instinctively he drew into a hollow  
Behind a lentisk thicket 'neath a rock

Jutting above the pathway where it curved,  
Whence he beheld three men with rifles  
equipped

For shooting—they were Frenchmen by their  
dress

And by their talk; then Clement very pale,  
Even quivering but with a dangerous  
Gleam in his large dark eye, stepped forth  
and blocked

The way, and hoarsely spake, "I want the  
duke."

They started, but the midmost man replied  
"I am the duke; your business, sir, with  
me?"

"A word in private if these gentlemen  
Will give me leave." The Frenchman lifting  
cap

Requests his friends to saunter on before;  
They passing turn the angle of the rock;  
So lost to sight; the Frenchman visibly  
Sallows through all his bloated sallow face,  
A man with hard coarse mouth but half  
revealed

Through black mustachios tapering either  
end,

A parvenu whose fashionable hauteur  
Is next of kin to vulgar insolence.

"Well, sir, I would be going, will you  
speak?"

"I think," said Clement, "there is little need.  
You know me and you know why I am here."

The Frenchman sneered, "I fear the man is  
mad.

How should I know you?" "Then, sir, I  
am he

Whose humble abode you lately stooped to  
visit

To rob me like a common skulking thief  
As it appears, for when my back was turned  
You stole my jewel—skulking off with it  
To this remote wild-beast lair. Where is she?  
What have you done with her? no paltering."

"Be calm," the man with livid lips replied,  
Ill-feigning swagger of indifference.

"Remember whom you speak to—as for you,  
Who may you be?" "Fellow, my ancestors  
Were kings and earls when yours were  
keeping swine,

Swinish like their own swine, and base like you !”

At those fierce words of Clement's with a cry  
Of wrath the duke raised suddenly the rifle  
Level with his shoulder ; Clement folding  
arms

Confronted him : “ Night-thieves and murderers

Are terms convertible, I am unarmed.”

Whereon the other lowering the rifle

Thrust it upon the bank. “ Well, name your time

And place. I'll give you satisfaction full.”

‘ You call it satisfaction ? I have heard.

So stands it—me, a thinker, man of peace,

Albeit noble, a bully like to you

All unprovoked invades, insults my wife,

Tramples my honour underneath his boot,

Draggles it for the dregs of men to hoot,

And when I call him to account invites

Me to stand facing him for him to shoot.

Large satisfaction to me for the wrong !

Sir, you add insult to your injury !”

“ If you're afraid,” the Frenchman sneered,

“ I've done

All in my power making you the offer.”

And then he added with malignant look,

More insolent since Clement had refused

The duel with him, “ Now I think of it,

The woman there whom you have come to seek—

Surely my lady friend of Monaco

Must have informed you that you do me wrong ;

I never forced her to come here with me ;

She freely came, needed no pressing, sir,

Nay rather pressed herself upon me ; so

I think that even if you found her out

(But this you shall not) at the castle there

She would request you travel back again.”

So, foolish and unskilled in reading men,

Babbled the upstart brutal arrogant,

Misreading Clement like a traveller

Who though he see yet little heeds the cloud

Of massy indigo slow bellying

Half swallow-blue and half ash-wan until

A big drop startles and sharp lightning blinds

Him, leaping from its muffle unaware ;

So the man failed to note or comprehend

The hate full filling that face of his foe

Confronting him while he insulted *her*,

Until outleapt like lightning forked the words

“ You lie : defend yourself : prepare for hell !”

And rapid as the thunder on the heels

Of a flash near us crashes after it,

Followed the scathing syllables a blow

Clement dealt suddenly with all his force

On the man's chest, who reeled ; but staggering

A pine-trunk saved him : then upon the brink

Of that abyss the two men grappled for life,

Swinging there to and fro both maniac

And blind with fury, their eyes lit from hell,

Jamming and knotting tense and burning limbs

Into one monstrous body like wild beasts

Whose demon maw torn free from one raw spot

But snaps again upon the nearest flesh

To burrow there with slakeless lust of death.

Both men were young and nearly matched for strength,

Though Clement was the slenderer : the duke

(Clement had forced him next the precipice)

Presently backward slipt—a treacherous tuft

That he had dinted with convulsive heel

Suddenly loosened from the very edge—

And both were toppling over, for the duke

Clutched Clement's arm and gripped it like a vice ;

But Clement, throwing one arm about the trunk

Hard by, with one fierce effort flung the man

(Dangling, his forehead clammy with despair)

Free from him slithering, who dug his nails

Into the rubble, a moment holding there :

Yet Clement demon-hearted wrenched a stone

Huge from its bedding, heaving it upon him ;

Then shrilled a curse, alive with agony

Death's horror and the hatred of the damned

Writhing and sinking fangs in Clement's heart,

As the poor wretch let go and tumbled back

Over the crag insheveling with the stone,

Bounding from point to point until he thumped

A hideous quivering pulp upon the rock  
 In the ravine, crushing the meek wild flowers.  
 Clement watched, listened, breathing short  
 and loud,  
 Kneeling with his two hands upon the brink,  
 With a fiend's relish sucking sight and sound,  
 Following in spirit, ruthless thrusting him  
 From shelf to shelf, and dancing on him  
 dead !

Sparkles yon burn set in the dusk ravine  
 With drowsy hum, the frail birch twinkle  
 there,

The near pine sighs in gentle-washing air,  
 Oozing with odorous gum in wrinkled bark ;  
 Butterflies flutter out on holiday,  
 Animate blue sky through the sunny blue ;  
 Pink-pinks the chaffinch from soft-flickering  
 leaves,

Green lizards glance among the sunbaked  
 stones,

Or rest at gaze with shoulder on the stone  
 And half their shadow, whirrs the cock-  
 chafer,

Leaps the red cricket, flits the furry mouse  
 To his smooth-patted hole in yon lush bank ;  
 The jetty beetle sprawls upon his back  
 Beading the lit speargrass with drops like  
 blood :

Nature serenely takes the death-struggle  
 Of two mere men, serenely as she takes  
 Impaling of a sparrow by a shrike  
 On yon bronze thorn, gulp of gay dragon-fly  
 By darting swallow : nothing witnesses  
 In her suave aspect to the agony  
 Of her two human sons ; except a blade  
 Here and there mangled on the very spot,  
 Club-moss elastic from their dinting freed  
 Uperjing now wee spore-capt stalks again,  
 Cyclamen soiled, half jammed into the ground  
 By the fierce feet that stamped and shuffled  
 here—

This, and the corse that stains the snap-  
 dragon

Far yonder in the gloom of the ravine,  
 And he who silent glares upon it nigh  
 Kneeling, and leans upon two murdering  
 hands.

## BOOK III

REACHING the castle he finds the tower door  
 That Giudice had hidden seek with ease,  
 Opens it springing up a winding stair  
 With stones well worn and old, nor any one  
 He meets—not Giudice—for Giudice  
 Encountering unforeboded obstacles  
 But now the Frenchman had decoyed afar,  
 Perforce accompanying him awhile ;  
 So Beatrice knew nothing of the past.  
 A room-door stood ajar—some smothered  
 sound

As of faint weeping fell upon his ear.  
 He paused—it was—it must be she—yet she  
 Surely expects him—how he longed to rush  
 And fold the form he thought that nevermore  
 He might enfold, and suck the poison out  
 Of her dear life with one long look of love  
 And one long kiss ! yet hesitated he  
 Remembering the caution of his guide.  
 What shall he do ? no sign of Giudice—  
 “ He may be hindered : I have but to reach  
 My hand to take her, she may slip from it :  
 Some servitor may find his master dead.”  
 This risk the greater, so with beating heart  
 He shoves the massive iron-clamped door,  
 And stands upon the threshold—it is she !  
 At the embrasure of the narrow light  
 She standing leans upon the cold harsh stone,  
 Sun streaming on her neck and head, beyond  
 Gleaming upon the untasted sumptuous meal  
 Behind her served in milk-white porcelain,  
 And gloating on the crimson velvet pile—  
 From when he burst upon her in the spring  
 Of her young life (ah ! not so long ago,  
 The same sun kindling the same wealth of  
 curls)

How changed alas ! grey cheeks in her thin  
 hands,

Her eyes peer wistful on the sea, but dim  
 With unshed tears and hollows dark beneath,  
 Her face looks wan like latter primroses  
 That linger draggled with much dust and rain,  
 And all her listless form breathes hopelessness.  
 Ah ! when we hear the faint pulsations fail  
 Of Hope the angel's wings upon the night,

Who parting from us turns his face to heaven,  
Life stricken at heart soon falters after him.  
Careless the ordering of her gracious hair,  
Sleek-brown, and of her modest summer dress  
Of muslin blue and white, the dress he loves,  
Of old though simply faultlessly disposed.

She turns not at the creaking of the door,  
Deeming 'tis but the servant, caring not  
That snake-like maid should deem her spirit  
weak,

Until he makes a step—something in that  
Turns her sharp round—a sudden light  
leaps up

Into her eyes, suffusing all her face.

“Clement!” she cries, a cry of ecstasy

Incredulous half with dazed fear, mistrust;  
She spreads her arms to fly to him, but pain  
Shoots sharply through her; swims the scene  
around

Dizzy and dark; she tottering, he runs

To strain a lifeless body to his breast.

Then, sick at heart, he gently lays her down  
Upon the bed, chafing the icy hands

And limbs, and breathes his breath between  
her lips,

In vain, until a step resounds below;

Giudice rushes in, but seeing them

Stops short, and snatches from a dark recess

A phial, which applied by him revives

Her from the deadly swoon, but after long.

And then he whispers that there wait beneath

Some trusty Corsicans who bear a litter

Disposed with cushions easy for the sick,

Since he had well foreseen that Beatrice

Was now too weak to travel otherwise.

“Only delay not or we may be lost.”

They carry her between them down the steps,

Tenderly laying her upon the couch

And sheltering with coverings freely lent.

Four men to bear her with a cautious tread  
Among dense cork-trees, Clement close at  
hand

With soul divided, half in rapture glowing  
To know her there, and half in anguish dipt,  
Chill with foreboding which he shakes from  
him

In vain, for aye it settles on him again,  
From seeing the fell ravage this brief time  
Has wrought in her so tender, sensitive.  
Her eyes are shut from feebleness, at peace  
Her fevered spirit now to feel him there,  
Opening anon and resting on his face,  
Those large mild eyes, mazy as forest leaves,  
Suffused with love-light mellow than day.

Anon she opens them to make it sure  
It is no blissful fleeting dream she dreams,  
But him indeed, and then the eyelids veined  
Droop low again to prison the vision close  
For lovesick soul to finger gloatingly.

Lest by exciting he may injure her

He speaks not; only once when they have  
paused

To rest, and make some change in carrying  
her,

He bends above her whispering “My own,  
The sea-air will revive you, and to-morrow  
They say we shall be home—our little  
home—

And then you will grow strong, and never I  
Will leave you any more, my only one.”

She smiles a placid though a languid smile,  
A smile like dimpling of a water still

In tiny sunlight ripples when a drop  
Drips from an oar suspended on its face.

“To-morrow, yes, to-morrow I shall be

At home,” she murmurs vaguely, dreamily.

Then looks to Clement, whispering earnestly,

“It is enough: we have each other now.

How have I prayed for this;” but then the  
tears

From weakness and emotion well again.

The men resume their burden all too light,  
And as they travel, through the blinking leaves

Gleam summer lightnings from the tiny wave  
With intervals of blue unruffled rest,

Which blends in Clement’s musing spirit now  
With that soft gleam of her faint opening eyes

Grown vague and vaguer like a weary child’s  
And their soft closing as in tranquil sleep.

Waits the felucca—she is borne asleep  
On board of it: “Name your reward, my  
friend,”

Clement in taking leave of Giudice

Has said ; but he "Reward would only come  
To steal the crown King Conscience crowns  
my deed

Withal. I thank you, and I glad accept  
Your feeling to me, but you know not, sir,  
How sore for poor men of integrity  
Their impotence of doing such as you,  
The rich they honour, some kind turn un-  
bought."

Warmly those gallant fishers every one  
Bade them God-speed, and Paoli liberal  
For Clement dealt a largess to the men.  
Each brings his little offering for their voyage  
And presses it upon them, coverings,  
A coat of oil-skin, bread and chestnut cakes,  
A wine-jar of pure grape-juice with leaf  
bunches

Stopping the mouth ; they set the sail lateen  
The owner and his brother Paoli ;  
And soon careening to a fair brisk breeze  
Dances away the tight felucca-boat  
Swelling her sail, with pitchy cutwater  
Cuffed in its prancing of the merry waves,  
Shivered their baffled sapphire into foam  
That frills the blue with evanescent lace,  
Simmers in flying melting in the wake ;  
While Clement, whose delight is in the sea  
To dwell by, sail on, swim and revel in,  
The briny blow exhilarates ; he feels  
He can breathe free again, that she is safe,  
Triumphs in his success and fills with hope.  
Near her he sits, but gazes over sea  
Toward their home, their sweet home over  
sea :

"Now is my outraged honour full avenged,  
And all her wrong : " his thought reverts to  
this.

No monstrous duty suffocating now !  
Monstrous, for one high friend and half him-  
self

Named it a crime, while all his righteous  
wrath,

His pride of caste, his individual pride,  
These stunned, confused him with their  
counter-cries ;

But deep mistrust of his own temperament  
Shrinking from violence through every nerve,  
Lest that should weight the scale conventional

Unduly, and he branded as a coward  
Among his own hidden thoughts live ever-  
more,

This had inclined the balance to revenge :  
And yet he travelled up the castle path  
With purpose indistinct, remembering  
And half mistaking what his promise was  
To Paoli before the cottage door—  
Chance the midwife of men's imposing deeds.  
Then he enacted o'er the tragedy,  
And shuddered, picturing the agony  
Of the man's look in digging bloodless nails  
Into the rubble, till the crash of stone  
Upon his fingers, and the curse in death,  
Tingled all through him with the writhing  
tumble

And ghastly thud of what had been a man.  
"You would have reached a hand to him  
for all

He may have done to you my gentle child !  
What will you feel when you shall come to  
learn,

When you shall know, that sweating cold  
he hung

'Twixt life and death, and I with hatred  
blind

In a brute's soulless frenzy hurled him forth  
For ever out of God's blest light of life,  
Where we all dwell by sufferance of Him !—  
Goaded thereto—not solely by my love—  
But by my own poor pride trailed scornfully  
And fouled of that man's feet—feet insolent  
With sickening beslaving of fools  
Who take the gewgaw puppet they them-  
selves

Have fashioned from the slime to be a god,  
Adoring their own drivelling handiwork !  
And should I suffer—I no doll but man,  
A man with power of brain to fashion men  
To their appointed end and point the way,  
A noble banned of that society  
Which honours such as he ; nay, voluntary  
Exile from those plebeian-natured men—  
Say, should I suffer this automaton  
For all its human shape to grind me dead.  
Or should I seize it in the nick of time,  
Shatter and shiver all its cunning springs.  
So save a man, so vindicate the right

Here where the anarch red Injustice reigns,  
Bruising in him the world which does me  
wrong?—

Wrong to myself! ah! 'tis myself, myself,  
Only myself, disguise it as I will.  
Forgiveness of a Christ who would have  
reached

A hand of mercy even to such a foe,  
This might have saved a human soul for  
God!

Perchance at least I might have saved mine  
own,

Holding this maniac hand from slaying him,  
A mere weak man, a puny enemy,  
But wounding slaying a far deadlier foe,  
The monster parasite, my selfishness,  
Waxed fat upon the vitals of my spirit;  
With one grand bound upswung myself to  
Christ!

And yet—and yet—if I had lifted him  
And he had slain me, what had chanced  
with her?

I dared not save for Beatrice's sake.  
Did duty bid me leave my tender child  
In clutches of a were-wolf human-guised  
Even when my barrel covered the foul beast?  
Fantastic virtue of a casuist!

In this cold-blooded analytic age  
We peer on deeds with such a mental lens,  
Some subtle tissue grows upon the sense,  
But we can name no more what thing we see.  
O for the instinct fine, the eagle gaze,  
Of stalwart men who march to mighty deed  
Straightforward, halting fumbling not as we  
Who blindly drift to action wondering  
If what we limply hold be good or ill.  
We grope in fogs of a too curious thought,  
We breathe oppressed for thinking how we  
breathe.

I only know yon corpse lies heavily  
Upon my heart, as on yon dragon-flowers  
Whose crushed and gaping mouths are red  
with gore."

Then his eye fell upon the primrose face  
Of her who slept: so faded sunk it was  
He shivered, venturing not to look and see  
What pale vague fear lurked ghostly in his  
heart.

But now she moved and made a muffled cry  
As from some ghastly vision in her sleep.  
He turning to her kissed and softly called:  
She crying again and starting from his touch  
Woke quivering, moaning, fixing a scared  
look

Upon his face, then softened as she looked  
And knew him, melting underneath his eyes  
To love and joy and trust inviolable,  
Like some frail snow-flake melting in the sun.  
Then all stole back upon her, where she was,  
And how; she whispered "For a moment,  
love,

I thought he held me, and behold! 'tis you!"  
She smiled so sweet a smile; he prayed her  
tell

If she were able something of the past.  
She told him the same story Paoli  
Had learned of how the duke decoyed her  
thence.

So partly from her shy and broken words,  
In part from notes which she had written  
yonder

And Clement later read in solitude,  
He framed a story featured like to this.

The traitor in the cabin of the yacht  
Addressed her with unbridled words of shame,  
Urging his reckless flame to justify  
The violence that he had dared to use.  
"A spark of boldness women admire, he knew,  
Kindled in men by their consuming eyes."  
She wept insulted, but the fool obtuse  
Extolled the brilliant life that she should lead  
In his French Castle or Corsican—she would  
Not hate him when she knew him something  
more.

But when he neared her offering to touch  
She shrank aside as from a leper's brush,  
Drew herself up—for dignity and strength  
Were hers in dire extremity—"Hold off!"  
She cried; "you prate of boldness, a base  
coward;

If Clement had been near, would you have  
dared?"—

But then at naming Clement's name she broke  
To tears again with sobbing "Clement,  
Clement!"

Why were you far from me, my own, my own,  
Where are you?—Do you really think," she  
spoke

Again to her tormentor, "that a woman  
Who has loved him and been beloved by  
him,

Even were he dead, nay buried a hundred  
years,

Could stoop to love so poor a thing as  
you?"

He paled, she said, with anger at the words,  
Quivered with hideous disappointed rage  
And answered—"Are you saintlier than the  
rest?"

Coyness they all affect, and yet I find  
All ductile to my fingers like warm wax :  
But time will show—remember only this,  
You're in my power and likely to remain."

Then forth he went and slammed the door  
behind.

She saw no more of him the voyage through ;  
He surly chewed in silence his rebuff,  
Bewildering to him the ill-success.

A little of her undiluted scorn  
And loathing in this interview with her  
Had eaten through the tough rhinoceros  
hide.

He never met a woman like to her,  
Scorned faith in such ; this woman dazed  
him sore.

He came not in the castle for awhile,  
Irresolute on what were best to do.  
His lacerated vanity drew horns  
Within the shell shrinking from some fresh  
wound.

If he surrounded her with all respect,  
All care and luxury, and left her free  
Unimportuned awhile and undisturbed,  
She in her loneliness might even crave  
His presence, brooding on his passion strong,  
Over his grandeur and the princely state  
That he would gird his paramour withal.  
And if she loved her mate (scarce credible  
To him from that report the marchioness  
Had made him of the man) she would forget—  
They all forgot—when days elapsed and  
nought

Of him or from him she should hear ; himself  
Had been abrupt and blundered ; she was not  
Easy to win, but needed skill to play,  
Glory the more in landing her ; he'd say  
That he had heard since from the marchioness  
How Clement had returned and seemed con-  
soled

By a renewal of his commerce old  
With her own self—and so but yesterday,  
The duke had plucked up heart to go again  
To Beatrice, despatching Giudice  
Craving for leave to visit her anon  
When it should seem most fitting to herself.  
She giving forced consent he came to her  
With deferential courtesy and minced  
"He only wished to see that all her wants  
Were full supplied—she had but to com-  
mand."

She answered "Only give me liberty  
To seek my husband." "Madam, even in  
this

I will obey you," cunning he replied,  
"Though I should sign my own death-  
warrant so,

If you still ask it after what I tell."  
And then he chuckling told the cruel lie.  
With confidence he spoke and half believed  
Himself the falsehood, for the marchioness  
Had said that Clement hankered after her.  
The bold abrupt words with a deadly chill  
Struck on the poor child, for she knew of old  
He and the lady had been closest friends ;  
But then the glorious incredulity  
Of love in face of all most damning facts,  
A moment pale, emerged triumphantly ;  
The gross but specious lie that frightened her  
Changed to a hideous yet transparent mask  
Masking the traitorous leering of a liar.  
"Add not base slander, sir, and calumny  
To your foul injury—you and your friend  
Can compass not the deathless fealty  
Of two leal hearts that love, and you blas-  
pheme

The sacred name whene'er you utter it.  
Clement and I can never cease to love  
Let come what may ; if one were in the grave,  
The other would love on, and there in heaven,  
O there we'll love each other undisturbed,

And only love each other evermore !  
 Yet can a man be wicked as you seem ?  
 I love him, sir, and he Clement loves me :  
 I think you did not know it, do not know,  
 You've been deceived ; the lady made you  
 think

We cared not for each other, that he cared  
 For her and not for me, but that was false.  
 He was all true, though I was often cross,  
 Nor clever like to him, and could not talk  
 Of learned things to him, and he was noble  
 And I was poor ; but then he knew how large  
 My heart was, and he ruled there all alone.  
 Let me go back to him, kind lord, I pray.  
 He breaks his heart there, mine is breaking  
 here !

You do not seem unkind, but I am dying,  
 I feel I am, and O ! if I should die  
 With not one look from his all-precious face  
 To carry to the lonesome grave with me !"  
 She faltered here and brake to bitter tears.  
 Feelings alternating had chased each other  
 In the man's mind—astonishment and rage,  
 Bewilderment, compunction, jealousy,  
 A maudlin admiration fuelling  
 His jealous lust—she looked so lovely now !  
 And last the sense that she was safely trapped  
 Within his grasp, no witness to the wrong  
 He had been gloating o'er the vision of.

In speaking she had risen from her seat,  
 Advancing near him wringing her frail hands :  
 A step he made and seized her by the wrist ;  
 She glancing quickly caught his wicked look,  
 Snatched herself free—"How foil me?" he  
 exclaimed ;

"Escape me now!" she clutching wild a knife  
 That lay nigh from the scarcely-tasted meal  
 Waved it with flashing eyes and answered  
 "So !"

Giudice entering, the baffled duke  
 Retired with baleful gaze and ne'er a word.  
 Then when he went she turned to Giudice,  
 Telling her story and imploring him  
 Piteously to befriend her ; Giudice  
 Was only charged that morning with her care,  
 And scarce had spoken, but something in his  
 look

Encouraged her to this forlorn appeal.  
 He soothed her like a father, settling her  
 Tender upon the couch and promising,  
 Though with a few brief words, to be her  
 friend.

And she confided in him like a child,  
 He cheering her and bidding her be brave  
 For Clement's sake, and holding out a hope  
 That he might soon contrive release for her,  
 Concluding "I am near you ; only ring  
 This little bell if you have need of me."

She thanked her God for him upon her  
 knees

That night, yet felt as if her slender strength,  
 Which needed kindly breath to foster it  
 And strong warm hands to chafe it, ebbed  
 apace :

"I shall not see him : no, he will not come,  
 Or he will come too late, when I am gone.  
 My God ! for him to look upon this face  
 And I not know it ! Ah, for him to press  
 His mouth to mine, and I not feel him there !  
 One kiss more, Father, only one ; I go  
 Willingly, happy, holding thy dear hand,  
 Into the darkness ; never looking back,  
 Not once, to where he stands in thy warm  
 light,

If only, Father, thou wilt grant this prayer :  
 But watch thou over him when I am gone !"  
 Soon from her sleepless bed the child arose,  
 Stole to the window in her linen white,  
 And looked toward the only spot she loved  
 Along the moonpath flecking tremulous  
 And thin the sea, like her own quavering  
 hope,

Lost in the far immeasurable gloom ;  
 Looked athwart groves in elf-light huddling  
 grey,

Ruffled their dream to whisper murmurous  
 As from strayed elf-wing skimming daintily—  
 But while the moonlight trickled through the  
 leaves,

Anon their dusk heart kindling would secrete  
 From it a voice, so rendered it again  
 To-night in guise of song ethereal pure  
 As its own self, now plaintive soft and low,  
 Now radiating, flashing all abroad,

Articulate moonlight, named a nightingale.  
 That was her post all day, she would not stir  
 From thence; though books had been provided for her,  
 Listless she turned their leaves but could not read.  
 Paper was there, and pens, and she had written  
 Something for Clement about every day,  
 What happened, what she felt, at evening written.  
 Save for this only crept the weary time  
 In gazing through the loophole over sea,  
 Hailing each sail and watching eagerly  
 Its fleeting tranquil in the offing by  
 Hazy through silver labyrinths in the blue—  
 Why the child knew not, only it might come  
 Perchance and land him here; at least it came,  
 Blest thing, from yonder, yonder where he was;  
 The steamers—how she peered for a faint stain  
 Of smoke to dusk the delicate white down  
 That feathered yon horizon to the north,  
 Hingeing those azure valves of sky and sea!  
 And the first days at every step or sound  
 Without she fluttered: it might be the duke,  
 It might be Clement landed unaware.  
 She listless watched the coral lady-birds  
 Creep up the stone and splitting speckled shards  
 Of tiny fans unruffling for a flight.  
 Ah! how she envied yon brown melon-girl  
 Emerging from the cork-grove up the steps  
 Of rock, her apron full of luscious fruit,  
 Chiding the dark-eyed roguish peasant-boy,  
 Yet laughingly, for winding his strong arm  
 About her waist, endangering the melons.  
 Ah! how she envied yon imperial bird,  
 Sublime possessor of immensity,  
 Breasting illimitable light, elate  
 Inhaling rich exhaustless draughts of life;  
 Or tiny siskins chattering as they flit,  
 Picking brown pine-cones for the kernels lithe.

A little silver lamp, with branches three  
 Budding soft light, and chain-swung candle gear,  
 They brought at evening, dim developing

The low-groined roof of stone, mouldings and cusps,  
 Spilling a random gleam on Persian rugs,  
 And oaken carven chests and Gothic chairs.  
 Giudice pulled her flowers the eve he came,  
 Purple corncockle, amaryllis white,  
 Crimson pomegranate-blossom, cyclamen.  
 She plunged her gaze in these: they grew at home;  
 He loved them, she might be disposing them  
 In their wee room to-night, or weaving them  
 Into her gracious hair; then languidly  
 She moving to a mirror 'gan to braid  
 Her tresses with them, plucking them away  
 Sudden and strewing them upon the floor,  
 Breaking to crying "He will never see them,  
 O! nevermore. I only long to die."  
 At night she started from a shallow sleep  
 With but the gnawing of a wainscot mouse,  
 Or crackling of some dry wood with the heat;  
 Then she lay sick at heart, hearing the tick  
 Of death-watch weevil in the panel nigh,  
 Watching the first faint grey of dawn suffuse  
 The loophole, and the earliest twittering bird  
 In the near carob as he stirred and spun  
 In a fine drizzle from his down the dew;  
 Yet this but ushered in the loathsome day,  
 Which still might turn to lovely, bringing him!

Then he related what had chanced with him  
 In brief outline, but passing one thing over,  
 His meeting with the duke: she seemed so weak,  
 Nor dared he mar the present with a tale  
 Painful to her and damping to their bliss.

Now when in silence eyes were drinking eyes,  
 She feeling faint, the tactful Paoli,  
 Who kept aloof till now, at sign from Clement  
 Filled from the wine-jar some restoring wine,  
 Presenting it to her: she smiled upon him:  
 "Good Paoli," she murmured, "ah! how good  
 Have many been to me, how happy now  
 I am who late repined and doubted God!"—  
 "He does but turn a moment his full face

Away, yet holds us if we see or no ;  
Still folds about us Everlasting Arms,"  
The old man answered, bending low his head  
With silver hair, and kissing her frail hand.  
In sunset now flush tiny clouds like down  
Torn from the bosom of some gentle bird,  
Strewn fluttering crimson with her meek life-  
blood

By some fierce vulture's talons and bald beak,  
Assailing her in heaven innocent,  
Tranquil in airs hued like the iris-bloom.  
And as the sun sank in the western water  
She shivering the two threw over her  
A mouflon skin one sailor lent to them.  
And then she whispered Clement to bend  
near.

"Clement," she said, "I may not look again  
On Italy with you, on our sweet home ;  
You'll see it, dear, but not with me ; how well  
I would have loved once more to see it with  
you !

It may not be—ah ! Clement, do not weep ;"  
For he was sobbing, crushing the little hand,  
And the hot tears fell blindly on her face,  
So she wept too—"Why think of this, my own ?  
You feel so weak, but you will soon be well ;  
I'll take you back to England ; 'tis the heat,  
And all you've suffered." "Nay," she soft  
replied,

"It may not be, my precious, it is time  
You knew it, for I feel the end is near :  
You must bear up ; at first it will be hard,  
But you will learn to live without me, love."  
"I cannot : where you go there I must go,  
I cannot live without you anywhere.  
You would not leave me—O my Beatrice !"   
He sobbing kneeling by her clasped her round  
With his face close to hers—and if her foe  
Drew nigh in any quarter from without,  
He must have rent the man to hurt the child.  
Yet now alas ! it was no human foe ;  
But He that gave demanding her again.

Yet soon with strenuous effort he controlled  
Himself, remembering what pain to her  
His anguish wild must yield ; she spake anon :  
" 'Tis terrible to leave you, love, but He  
Who made us ah ! how happy wills it so.

Shall we receive the good and not the evil  
From the same hand ? 'tis the same Father,  
love,

Offers both cups. I do not fear to die.  
All has been well, and all must yet be well.  
I know that wheresoever I may go,  
If my soul live, my soul must be with you ;  
Ere I can leave you I must cease to be ;  
Only you will not see me for awhile,  
Until you join me where I go before.  
I told Him I would take His hand and go  
When He should call, and not look back to  
you,  
If I could see you, kiss you once again ;  
You'll help me not to break my word to Him.

Where will you put me ? in the little garden ?—  
That would be sweet, that warm spot in the  
sun,

Where the wild thyme breathes fragrance fit-  
fully,

The free blithe bee hums near one, then afar.  
Among the planes, hushed o'er with lullabies  
Eternal from the sea—our favourite spot,  
Where you will come and lie as we were wont  
To lie, and think about your little child.  
She will be near you, very near you still,  
Under your feet, ah ! not upon your breast !  
'Twas there I lay longing for you to come—  
And do you know, dear, it is very strange,  
But yonder in the castle while I stood  
One evening gazing homeward I believed  
That I was there awhile again, I saw  
The spot so plain, I smelt the smell of thyme,  
I even thought I saw you coming to me—  
But then I started, knew it was a vision."  
And Clement marvelled musing on his vision  
Of her, but had no heart to speak of it.  
"Next year the grass and daisies will be fresh  
And fair upon the spot as they are now.  
Then when He calls you, you will come and lie  
Still nearer me, down under the warm grass :  
You'll come there, won't you ? you will keep  
the spot ?"

He only pressed her closer for reply,  
And but a rare sob broke the silence now.  
She seemed to want to speak again, and  
signed

With a weak gesture for the cordial,  
Which Clement took and tilted 'tween her lips.  
"We wished," she said, "to have one little  
babe ;

Would for your sake it had been ordered so !  
You could not have been lonely then—but if,  
If you are very lonely you must try  
And love again ; you need not quite forget—  
Keep one warm corner for your little one,  
One only in your large heart—only one.  
She will not mind, I think, and yonder, there  
In God's full facelight, there is room for all !"  
Her glazing eyes looked heavenward and she  
smiled.

"Forgive me, love," in broken accents now  
She gasped, "that I could not be all I wished  
To you, I was not clever enough for you,  
You know—and I was peevish very often ;  
But I have loved you ; you'll forgive me,  
sweet ?"

"'Tis you, 'tis you," he faltered ; "nothing I  
Have to forgive, but you have much, my own ;  
I tried you sore—but you have borne with me  
Like my own guardian angel that you were,  
And that you will be, till I turn to dust.  
My God ! my God ! may that be very soon."

The breeze now scarcely flapped the idle sail  
Against the mast, each little ripple kissed  
With sucking plash and tilted the dusk boat,  
Some oar knocked, and the loose-held tiller  
creaked ;

And while he watched her face he heard the  
sound,

And knew the tender mellowing apple-green  
And primrose-yellow faded in the west.

But the change came into it, nameless change  
And fearful ; and he called her by her name :  
The lips moved shaping "Clement," as he  
thought ;

One laboured inspiration, and 'twas peace,  
Peace in the gentle breast for evermore.

"She's gone," a tender voice beside him said ;  
It was the old man bending over them.

If Clement heard he only buried his face  
In hers whence all the warmth ebbed, and  
his arm

Threw round that face with fingers in the hair,  
And pressed his mouth to hers convulsively,  
As though he deemed that if his living heat  
Could not pass into her, at least her cold  
Might pass to him ; and he might be for ever  
Henceforth dead cold with her : for life was  
dear

Because she lived ; now life was nought, and  
death—

Death was all-dear to him—for she was death.  
Vain were the kind rich words of Paoli  
In his deaf ear, and vain his gentle force  
To draw him from her now that she was gone.  
It needed all the strength of all the men  
To draw him, as was needful, from the corse ;  
And, when they drew him, the wild vacant eye  
And wildered gesture told the mind had given.

Freshened the breeze as night grew old ;  
the moon

Sailed high and clear in heaven ; but he sat  
Staring toward the silent muffled shape.

Since he was quiet grown, old Paoli

Suffered him near the stretcher sit again  
On an old box of fishing-gear ; and still,  
Wrapt in a cloak, he sat there all the night.

Only at intervals he lifted up

A corner of the veil upon her face ;

Looked at her, kissed her forehead, and if any  
Walked loudly near in managing the boat,  
He turned and placed his finger on his mouth  
With, "Hush, she sleeps ! as quiet as you  
can !"

Almost indeed, if he had been himself,  
He might have deemed that she was but  
asleep

Now in the moonlight, quiet and serene.

When the same moonlight shone into their  
room,

In the dear villa yonder, many a night,  
And fell upon her face with him awake,  
Did it look very otherwise ?—the long,  
Long lashes of each upper eyelid closed,  
Mazed with sweet sister lashes from beneath,  
Laying fine shadow on the delicate cheek ;  
The pale brow misted round with tender mist  
Of hair that deepens o'er the placid head—  
Only there is no waking any more.

So wore the night ; and the day following,  
 In afternoon, they made the little port—  
 A gemlike harbour all in miniature ;  
 Its shining feudal palace on the rock,  
 With sentinel and cannon, cypress-cone  
 Relieved against the light, palmetto, palm ;  
 The tiny steamer, with few fishing-boats,  
 In sapphire alternate with emerald ;  
 Fringed fair with houses white 'mid orange-  
 groves,

Embastioned of mountain-crests abrupt.  
 He who had taken, it seemed unconsciously,  
 Some little food they offered followed quiet  
 Paoli and those who bore that burden meek  
 Upon the shore, and only bade them heed  
 To take her gently—" 'Tis a healthful sleep ;  
 She needs it ; she was very tired, you know."  
 Paoli had overheard her when she asked  
 Clement to bury her in that green spot  
 Within their garden—now arranged it so.  
 He did for Clement, with the maiden's help,  
 All Clement would have wished and done,  
 he knew ;

Wrote to the consul of his nation nigh,  
 Who came, but after the sad funeral.  
 Once only, when the bearers shuffled round  
 The deep grave, and the ropes were griding  
 round

The coffin, Clement, who had sunk, it seemed,  
 Into a stupor vacant while they did  
 Their ghastly office for the heedless dead,  
 Sudden awoke and spread his arms and rushed  
 Toward the hole and shouted wild her name ;  
 But they by force restrained him, leading him  
 Into the house, where till the following day  
 When the kind consul moved him to the town,  
 He wandered up and down, as he had done  
 That evening ere he sailed to seek for her—  
 Peering as then about their little room,  
 Above, below, as seeking her, and pausing  
 As if he listened, fancying she called.  
 And he would finger all her little things—  
 Her shawls and dresses, bracelets, and her  
 work

With needle left in it, the little stocking  
 For some poor child—wearing an air intent,  
 As waiting half bewildered for her step  
 Upon the stair, and listening for her voice.

## BOOK IV

By kindly tending was the mourner won,  
 How loth soever, back to common life ;  
 Who after reckless roaming in far lands  
 Bent last his course towards his native shore  
 Imperatively summoned thitherward.  
 And still he loved to minister to want,  
 Warm friend to grief, and still a mellow smile  
 He wore for innocent joy and loving bliss ;  
 But his bright curls were thin upon his brow ;  
 Wan, pale, and aged untimely he appeared,  
 While fixed sadness like a yewtree cast  
 Perpetual gloom on his deserted heart  
 As o'er some ruined cloister which the living  
 Tread no more but avoid ; 'tis consecrate  
 Unto the dead who rest beneath its flags.  
 Alas ! for him restless philosophy  
 Had peered and fingered till the walls of  
 creeds,

So venerable and solid as they seemed  
 In the twilight, fell crumbling here and there.  
 Or tore to shreds and gaping made a way  
 For dismal wind and rain that are no dream.  
 But he was of a soul amphibious,  
 Two elements essential unto it,  
 One for imagination and for thought,  
 The other, sustenance of life and love.  
 He lived and loved, he lost himself in her,  
 A second self far dearer lovelier  
 Than his own self ; she from his vitals torn,  
 Earthward he sank all mangled to the core.  
 Forget he could not, would not if he could ;  
 And things which could not love pronounced  
 him weak,  
 And things without a mind pronounced him  
 fool,

Sneered at his dark and vain philosophy ;  
 While ruddy animals of vigorous frame  
 Strutted and gabbled of strong character ;  
 While pious folk averred he made an idol  
 Of her he lost, and God was jealous of her,  
 Jealous of Clement's mighty love for her,  
 Counting it so much pilfered from himself.  
 Was God then but a greater Marchioness ?  
 Clement should lavish not his love on her,  
 But while she shivered in the outer cold,

He with mouth rigid, lifting treacherous eyes,  
Should say "'Tis corban !" spilling it in the  
snow.

We may be impotent in love, but ah !  
Shall we blaspheme the All-Father for our  
fault ?

The Love Eternal feeding our weak love,  
Yearning to flush it through a myriadfold  
Until it leaps and broadens to embrace  
In its divine blaze all the universe—  
The Love Eternal jealous of our love !

Yet he became no hermit, only he,  
Though unforeseen he had inherited  
The title of his forefathers and estates,  
Could herd not with the brainless moneyed  
tribe

Who warmed about him crawling at his feet !  
Old stately dames, portly or vulture-necked,  
Grew unaware obsequious and bland ;  
He trode upon them as they seemed to crave,  
But straightway drove them forth without  
their dole.

While they with meekness very Christian  
Endured his "little eccentricities."

Could he have taken, as he was wont of  
yore,

What we name heaven for grand reality,  
Not for mere painted splendours in the dome,  
He might have held communion with her still,  
Scarce interrupted by the change of death ;  
Failing but as the recognition fails  
A moment of a friend we left in pain  
And sorrow, whom we find again elate  
And radiant with health and happiness :

"Indeed I did not know you" we exclaim,  
But straight we know him and rejoice together.  
Communion with her would only fail  
Through death as recognition fails when we  
Are travelling and come to some fair spot  
In twilight, vague aware of dusky scenes,  
Water and mountain ; in the sunrise fails  
When we awake and fling the window wide  
Beholding mountains crowned and girt with  
light,

Torrents and lakes their trains of flashing  
gold.

He would have shivered gazing down the  
chasm

Where she seemed lost, but would have heard  
anon

Her call from yon sunslope, and shading eyes.  
Dazzled a moment, have beheld her climb

Godward for aye buoyant and luminous !  
But Reason banned the quest forlorn of Hope,

And coldly sternly whispered "She is dead."  
For so alas ! ran Clement's wayward thought—

"Though nought may perish in the universe,  
Yet Nature is the Proteus in a flux !

For us we live in children, or in friends,  
In every moment's subtle influence.

But is not influence expended power  
Feeding the world upon the garnered store

We name a person ? for the tissues wear,  
The organs fail, slow dwindles out the store.

Not the most selfish man can live for self,  
But lovers take the life-law to their hearts.

They give themselves—God takes them at  
their word :

Who shall complain ? His universe will grow  
A little by their grand self-sacrifice,

And they fulfil their own ideal so."  
So Clement deemed she lived indeed, but

lived

In him, in all the noble and good in him ;  
Her life, as boastless of its nectar rare

And yet as lavish of it as the flowers,  
Living in him transmuted, flowed again,

Like nectar grown to honey in the bee,  
Rich stored in cells of individual art

To feed mankind ; yea and her very death  
Wailed in the weird magic of his strain,

Tinged all his song with its own plaining  
minor,

Sinking to human spirits' very root ;  
Circuiting wider, meshing souls who dwell

In dark seas of experience and deep—  
"Yet can the individual person cease ?

Would that she lived yet, howsoever far  
From me !" wept Clement often—" 'tis a

dream,  
Beautiful, natural, noble, yet a dream !

For why may not the individual cease ?  
The newborn babe was none a year ago—  
Itself but person now in embryo."

Yet it had been herself that Clement loved,  
 The lovely childlike maiden and no other ;  
 No principle ; a simple country girl ;  
 And still he yearned for love to fill his heart.  
 But should he banish his once chosen child  
 Because she nestled in his bosom no more ?  
 They were to love for ever ; was a year  
 Or two so long to keep her memory green,  
 To keep her memory green with secret tears,  
 Then would come death, dear death, with  
     breath grown sweet  
 And warm from kissing on so dear a mouth.  
 Must he wipe out the Eden of his life  
 So clean from reverence and memory ?  
 For him he could not.

A mysterious

Chamber there was in gallery remote  
 Of the ancestral castle where he dwelt.  
 None entered there but, in the dead of night,  
 Himself—'twas whispered that her picture  
     hung  
 There and before it ever burnt a lamp.  
 There were the precious little remains of her,  
 Dresses and trinkets, books and some dried  
     flowers  
 They pulled and pressed together in the South.  
 And some affirmed that he who worshipped  
     not  
 In any temple worshipped nightly there.  
 For was not she the noblest symbol God  
 Vouchsafed to Clement's own especial life,  
 Next unto Christ, supreme and given to all ?  
 At times he felt she must be living still ;  
 Did not her spirit flash upon his own  
 At intervals ? she seemed so very nigh—  
 Yet that might be a vision of the brain !

While others spilling malice from their  
     fangs,  
 Because to herd with them amused him not,  
 And he was proud to all pretentious folk,  
 Hinted him not abstemious from delights  
 Of sense, as men might deem for all his love  
 Buried in that one little grave with her.  
 Yet since his intimates (but one or two),  
 For all his genial sympathy, no more  
 Set foot in certain precincts of his life

And strange lone tortuous spirit than within  
 That gallery of his ancestral castle,  
 Ancient and vast and tombed in snowclad  
     pines,  
 This was but vague suspicion to the last.  
 Yet he was not the man that he had been.  
 Though stern he seemed and silent commonly,  
 When mortal anguish and despondency  
 Sombred him more than wont—he shut him-  
     self  
 For days alone, nor any ventured nigh.  
 But from his incoherent muttering,  
 Some deed or deeds of darkness men affirmed  
 Must weigh upon him ; visions haunted him,  
 Hallucinations often troubled him ;  
 And every night the menials avowed  
 He talked with some one in the lonely room,  
 Though never any made him a reply.  
 Yet once a servant bolder than the rest  
 Lingering nigh the chamber caught some  
     words  
 Like these " If thou hadst lived, life of my  
     life,  
 Blown drifted as I am by passion fierce,  
 By veering speculation, all my days,  
 The evil bitter taint within my blood  
 Of gloom and madness might have reached  
     to thee,  
 And these hands, even these, have torn thy  
     breast !  
 Ah ! if the chill damp of the outer world  
 With its dull soulless death of every day  
 Had eaten corroding with its rust away  
 The mirror-sheen, the substance of our hearts !  
 Have I not seen old people dumb and cold—  
 Who once were lovers—with but breath  
     enough  
 Left now to drivelling jeer at what they were,  
 Beautiful living men and women ; now  
 Dead-alive bodies ghastlier than the dead !  
 With all the immortal life in the young world  
 Pulsing and throbbing, surging them about,  
 Nigh deaf and blind, yet lifting palsied hands  
 Quavering " O great tide, come no farther in !"  
 Yet could I ever make thee happy, love ?  
 I was too weird, too grave and self-absorbed,  
 My sunny child, for thee—'twas well to go—  
 For might I not have dazed thy very soul

With my bewildering counsels, a blind guide,  
 Leading thee blindly, leaning on me, child?  
 I brought a dark chill on thy sunny life,  
 Who would have shed my heart's blood out  
     for thee!

Fed on thy life I live, but thine went out  
 From feeding mine—this all-accursed life—  
 Ah! let me quench it and lie down to rest! . . .  
 Beatrice! your lips move! O speak to me!"

And as with horror paralysed he stood  
 He fancied that a softer voice replied;  
 Then all was silence—but the listener  
 Shivering stole again to whence he came.

But Clement made a yearly pilgrimage  
 To yon dear shrine, his Compostella fair,  
 That lowly villa, musing on her grave  
 In sunshine and by moonlight wandering  
 About the orange-groves and mountain-paths,  
 Or sitting in the old room as of yore.  
 'Twas there he made the song concerning her  
 That had for title "LOST," and thus it ran.

### LOST

With evening hued like autumn leaves  
 The porch is fair, still sleeps the air,  
 She comes through yonder light and weaves  
 Flowers as I loved them in her hair.

This is her hour, from yonder groves  
 She comes to me, upon my knee;  
 You'll know her, for whene'er she moves,  
 For joy she sings like bird or bee.

The butterfly in glory lit  
 With pulsing wings on flower that swings  
 Caught in her shadow will not flit,  
 So sweet the trouble that she brings.

The redbreast sidling shy to peck  
 Wee crumbs that fill the window sill,  
 Who timorous veers a tiny neck,  
 From her pink palm sips tame and still.

I only watched in church with her  
 Through ivy stream the flickering beam,  
 Upon her sweet slim feet to stir  
 And dally in a fond day-dream.

Her singing never took by storm  
 The listless ear, the stranger's ear,  
 Yet hymns of seraph could not warm  
 My heart like her frail accents near.

I would to all fair sights that stir  
 In earth and sky be blind for aye  
 For one more far-off glimpse of her,  
 Scarce lovely to the loveless eye.

And when among the crowds I move  
 Some air or dress, some tone or tress,  
 That savours of my own lost love  
 Will draw me doting through the press,

To find a stranger and dispel,  
 And make to fleet, the glamour sweet,  
 Fond glamour known for dream too well,  
 More dear than all the friends I meet.

With whisper of her mellowing grain,  
 With treble of brook and bird and tree,  
 Earth joys for ever to sustain  
 The bass eternal of the sea.

And years flushed o'er with flowers of bliss  
 Dance every one from shade to sun,  
 Fresh youths and maidens yearn to kiss,  
 As we have done, O little one!

I liped the joy, now yield my place,  
 For me no more kind years may pour,  
 Who only want one meeklit face,  
 One face gone out for evermore!

But why, ah why! when day burns low  
 Doth that sweet hum still faintly come,  
 As of sweet talk that used to flow  
 Through her closed door to my lone room?

Poor fool! 'tis but the mumbling wind  
 That talks like her, nor means to jeer;  
 For subtler wind are love and mind,  
 And she but wind who nestled here!

But when for six years he had dragged the  
     chain  
 Of life without her, revolution flashed  
 Among a noble people who uprose  
 To free themselves from tyranny or die.  
 He joining with enthusiasm fought  
 As one who set scant value upon life.

After the battle on the gory clay  
They found him through the heart shot lying  
dead—

A portrait on him of a lovely woman  
Wet from his heart's blood, with a tress of  
hair

Let into crystal on the side reverse ;  
A shred of writing naming him by name  
They found beside, with earnest-breathing  
prayer

That if 'twere possible he might be borne  
To Monaco and buried where he named.

Twin crosses in white marble mark the  
spot,  
Small, graven, side by side, and two low  
mounds ;  
While lullabies eternal from the sea  
Float dreamy o'er the eternal slumberers.  
Oft an old man brings wreaths of im-  
mortels  
For the two crosses tottering and weak.  
Some spiral grasses whisper, marking soft  
Their shadows on the marble and in flower  
Nestling into the graving of the names.  
But those two hearts, the turbulent and the  
meek,  
Worn out and weary slumber full of peace,  
And in their deaths they are divided not.

UPON her stone at dead of night  
Flashed the wild rain in lightnings white,  
She unaware of sound or sight.

The shadowing minster clanged on high,  
Chariots of loud life hurried by,  
Disturbing ne'er the sleeper nigh.

Her little girl had grief to smother  
E'er since the father took another  
In place of her own tender mother.

By moonlight to the grave she crept,  
Tears on her mother's name she wept, . . .  
. . . Who the same sleep unheeding slept.

## SONG

“LIKE HER, BUT NOT THE  
SAME”

I SEEK her by the stream that laves  
Yon crumbling convent wall,  
And in the silent place of graves  
That loved her soft footfall,  
Then in a dream through evening calm  
Again we wander by the palm.

But lo ! this glooming crust unstirred  
Gives o'er the sombre glow  
Of caverned fire—my dream is blurred,  
I wake—the fire is low. . . .  
I hear alone the wind and rain  
To-night chill beat my window-pane.

Yet she is nigh—behold, they say,  
Yon gracious queenly dame !  
More cold this cold heart turns away  
Like her—but not the same !  
I knew I left *her* lying where  
Yon graves in sunlight sleep so fair !

## KATHLEEN

Two children in the olden time,  
Who in a summer evening gleam  
Up to the front coach-window climb  
To watch the team ;

Four grey blood-horses in a steam  
That draw the children home from town  
Through orchards rosy with the beam  
Of day gone down.

Dear is the fair familiar way,  
The merry children point elate  
To spots endeared of old in play—  
Wood, stile, or gate.

“Tom, you remember ? there's the pool  
You threw the poor old spaniel in.”  
“There, Kate, we found the red toadstool  
By yon gold whin !”

In far vein-purple tracts of sky  
A star thrills; blackbird, nightingale,  
Pulse ecstasies from maybloom nigh  
And sweetly fail.

And then the sleek-haired maiden sings,  
Both children kneeling toward the glow  
While the fond boy about her clings,  
Soft sings and low

A ditty that he loves to hear,  
Of gentle girl who died, "Kathleen";  
Yet gathers in his eyes the tear—  
Her name "Kathleen." . . .

The years flow by; some mourners move  
Through drifting leaves of autumn slow;  
A youth the sister of his love  
Follows in woe.

And as they leave her in the rain,  
A milkwhite doe she often fed  
Through the dim forest limps in pain  
To lean its head

Upon the harsh grave-wall and die.  
More sweet to it than dells of green,  
Where mate and fawn sun-dappled lie,  
Thy grave, Kathleen!

### JUNE ROSES

No lower, no lower, along the lane!  
For the place it was here I know,  
Where over the far meadow's bloomy wane  
Yon rose waves to and fro,  
I remember the curve of the flexile spray  
And the way these roses grow.

How they float on the maze of the verdure lush,  
And ruffle to feel the breeze,  
Where they lie full-blown with a delicate flush!  
Do you love them most, or these  
Opening coy with a crimson blush,  
Hiding golden hearts for the bees?

Do you mind how you bade me cull you a  
rose?

But the spray swam over my head  
With a stress of air, "One would say that it  
knows,

As you breathed the word it fled;  
With the sister blooms it would fain repose  
Till the gentle leaves be shed!"

"Little skilled in reading the heart of a  
flower,"

Your answering tones I heard;  
"See close to your hand the pale rose cower  
Lest you take her at her word!"

But there fell the first drop of a thunder  
shower,  
And the rose it was left and blurred.

Is it easier now to remember the spot  
Where we paused in the sweet green lane  
Than to find the warm feeling we soon forgot,  
Left there like the flower to wane?  
She said "There are hearts that blossom not  
Like the roses of June again!"

### "AND SHE WAS A WIDOW"

YEA, thou hast left us, love, left us alone,  
Coldly the rain, love, sobs on thy stone,  
Still throng the world's pulse full life and  
sound,  
Thine only solitude, stillness profound!

In a fathomless want the world labouring  
rolls,  
Importunate hands ever reach to their goals,  
The fruits we long wild for, the fruits we  
attain  
Feed our longing with ashes, and still we  
are fain.

River of life ever ample unfolding!  
Ships we beheld from their anchorage slide  
All the burning midwater yet royally holding,  
Dost thou lose, love, thy joy in their pomp  
and their pride?

Yea, in sooth, for the warm nook is vacant  
 anigh me,  
 Warm nook in the sweet grass from whence  
 we beheld  
 Stately movements of nations, yet while they  
 pass by me  
 From wont oft I turn to thy corner of eld.

Yet ne'er by the veiled lamp in day's long  
 declining  
 As I read from the day-leaf thy silver-white  
 hair  
 Will bend low to hear me more, lowly in-  
 clining,  
 Slumber surprising thee hearkening there !

To how many a chance, like a blossom or bent  
 Along the life-lapse idle eddying by,  
 Stole a sweet fleeting beam from our loving  
 look lent ;  
 But now in one gloom let them fleet, let  
 them die !

Yet the world never more with its malice  
 may sunder,  
 Nor ever more sever chill mists from within,  
 Not a mortal my heart's mellow memory  
 plunder  
 One has folded our love from the tarnish  
 of sin !

But the earliest cuckoo calls from the bough,  
 There are liltings of young love, nests in the  
 tree,  
 We too have dreamed a sweet dream, I and  
 thou—  
 And we wait for a sweeter awaking to be !

### A WALK IN SPRING

#### I

Do you remember our walk that day  
 To the church upon the steep  
 With grass about the wall so grey  
 Where the weary slumber deep ?  
 Like a heavenly hand the sunshine lay  
 To bless them in their sleep.

#### II

We passed by the wicket-gate you know  
 To the tender-budding wood,  
 Dew lingering in the blooms below,  
 Where intermittent flowed  
 Warm sprinkled sunlight to and fro  
 With the leaflets' frolic mood.

#### III

By the broken gate that idly swung  
 Near umber tilth ajar  
 Our eyes to faint horizons clung,  
 Bloomed as young wheat-sheaths are.  
 You deemed it must be sea that hung  
 Blent with yon skies afar.

#### IV

Lo ! red thorns on the briar fair,  
 And buds uncurling green,  
 Bird notes flash lavish everywhere,  
 Spill water brimmed, or lean  
 Long plainings on the summer air  
 That seem to sleek the sheen.

#### V

A foal lithe frisking round his dam  
 In cowlslipped meadow plays ;  
 Pushing, a weak-limbed nestling lamb  
 Beneath his parent sways ;  
 With cool slant shade each blade's green  
 flame  
 A sister blade allays.

#### VI

When we had chosen a primrosed nook,  
 Some rustle made you start,  
 You feared a snake and you bade me look,  
 But I stilled your little heart ;  
 Last year's sere fern a blackbird shook,  
 Or a weasel stole athwart.

#### VII

We gazed beyond the meadows low  
 And apple-blossomed farm,  
 To nebulous woodlands where the glow,  
 Leaning so close and warm,  
 Woos their shy secrets' yielding flow  
 With zephyr's whispered charm.

## VIII

Shy secret of the bud and leaf,  
 Shy secret of the bloom,  
 And such as now in Springtime flood  
 Sweet nests in emerald gloom  
 Of bosage where some finch may brood,  
 And a stray beam only come.

## IX

But summer, I deem, had sunk that day  
 Not into flowers alone ;  
 She woo'd shy secrets as they lay  
 In two young hearts unblown ;  
 Love breathed upon them in their May,  
 Till each in each had grown.

## X

And I watch your pulses' gentle heaves  
 Flutter your skin of silk,  
 Till the shadow of some fluttering leaves  
 Plays on your wrist of milk,  
 And even to your white bosom cleaves  
 Soft amorous lights to bilk.

## XI

About you stealing sweetly coy  
 To yield you all to me—  
 Birds flowers weaving as they toy,  
 Vague heaven round me and thee—  
 Until alone with our young joy  
 In the world we seem to be !

## BLIND AND DEAF

## PART I

A GIRL lies quiet in a humble room  
 The fresh spring dawn doth tranquilly illumine,  
 Pale but for flush of fever on her face,  
 Yet calm she sleeps now in that quiet place ;  
 Nor though the little casement stand ajar  
 Can the sunlight her first sweet slumber mar,  
 So well her rose and honeysuckle try  
 To soften the day for her with greenery :  
 Her dear rose-linnet in his osier cage  
 With blushing breast the season doth presage :

But poorly seems that cottage room adorned—  
 Rude pictures such as wealthier folks had  
 scorned

And little figures rude of earthenware  
 Of boys and girls, beasts blue and white, are  
 there

Upon the chimney-shelf : the bed is mean  
 With a patched coverlid of varied sheen.  
 A mother works and watches by her side,  
 'Tis now the crisis of the turning tide :  
 Say, shall it whelm the silent sufferer  
 Or at her very lips ebb down from her ?  
 Profound that slumber, but she wakes at  
 last ;

She does not move, the lurid visions past ;  
 For now she tastes the bliss of painlessness,  
 Too weak to stir or think, yet feels no less  
 "Sweet life is mine, not death ; now I shall  
 live."

And soon creep thoughts like creatures that  
 revive

From winter's frost—"I thank my Father,  
 God,

For I was young to lie beneath the sod ;  
 I would not leave dear Mother and the  
 weans—

Do not sweet scents come through my leafy  
 screens ?

Is not the young year glad with budding  
 greens ?"

Now would she turn and look if one be near  
 Her heart yearns after, but she scarce may  
 stir :

Yet the quick ear that listens by the child  
 Has caught the rustle, and with bounding wild  
 The mother's heart leaps up : she leans above,  
 Love in her eyes to light her weary dove  
 Home from the waste whose bound no wan-  
 derer knows,

Finger on mouth, with motion to repose—  
 Yet the maid pays no heed as if distraught,  
 But thus meanders her untrammelled thought :  
 "I do not hear the children on the stairs  
 With softened voices as they play at bears :  
 Yet little Tom and May disturbed me not,  
 They knew that I was ill—maybe remote  
 From now the time when I was taken first.  
 And yet—'tis strange—I do not hear as erst

The measured clicking of the old Dutch clock  
 Upon whose face the ship was wont to rock ;  
 'Tis very dark ; hardly I fathom it ;  
 Am I alone ? or would poor Mother sit  
 Without a fire or candle ?" Then she grows  
 Bewildered rather, till the fond face glows  
 Near and more near, until it feels her brow ;  
 This makes her gentle spirit overflow  
 With limpid joy ; returning kisses faint—  
 "You have been ever by me, Mother, saint !"  
 She murmurs. "Once more in the dear sun-  
 shine

With you I shall go wandering, mother mine !  
 But light a candle, darling, it is dark !  
 On moonless nights there always came some  
 spark

Of starlight through the honeysuckle's trail ;  
 You had a fire when I began to fail,  
 When I remember last." "Hush ! dearest  
 child

You must not talk now," prays the mother  
 mild ;

"But O my God !" she utters in her heart,  
 "Now the spring sun she longs for doth  
 impart

His glory to us all—does she awake  
 Ne'er to behold him more ? Thou wilt for-  
 sake

Not her, O Father, whom Thou dost awake  
 To life within my arms !" "A light, I pray !"  
 The child cries anxious, now athirst for day.  
 Then falls a large hot tear upon the cheek  
 Of her forlorn, a tear the mother weak  
 May not restrain : but all remaining still,  
 No light, no answer, dire forebodings fill  
 Her fainting heart with sudden hands and  
 chill :

"Speak, my own Mother, answer me," she  
 pressed ;

So now the mother knows that she had  
 guessed

The bitter truth, the whole ; she stoops and  
 winds

Her arms about the child, who troubled finds  
 The cheek she best loves wet against her own.  
 She weeps too, but the little heart has flown  
 Where it was always wont distressed to fly.

Far as it seems unto the world, yet nigh

To a child's heart, that inner sanctuary—  
 "And would I face even death, how  
 willingly !"

She whispered, "Father, so to be with Thee !  
 And shall I not be with Thee even now ?"

Then quietly with pale unruffled brow  
 She turns upon the pillow, and she speaks  
 With a sweet patience, only with the breaks  
 Of now and then a sob "My mother press  
 Me to your side if truly I shall guess :

Am I not deaf ?" Into her breast she draws.  
 Then the child falters, after but a pause,

"And, Mother, press me if I should be blind !"  
 As of love's agony she feels the bind  
 Of those fond arms anew—and while she drifts  
 Far from the old blest earth, whose glory  
 shifts

From eye to ear, from raptured ear to eye,  
 That she has loved with what intensity !  
 She knows that two new fibres strong as death  
 From now her spirit to her mother's wreath,  
 And while in vain her eyeball seeks the ray  
 Deep in her heart dawns the Eternal Day !

## PART II

SLOW mantled Spring till Summer overflowed  
 Life's goblet, ebbd to Winter ; when it  
 glowed

Afresh, at casement meek behold her sit  
 Where butterfly-like breezes wanton flit ;  
 Her all-unspotted careful-ordered dress  
 Denotes of tending eyes the watchfulness ;  
 A book of raised type is on her knee,  
 But one arm on the window leaneth she,  
 Her head upon her hand with face full-turned  
 Upon the Spring, as if her spirit yearned  
 To that—for grand about her all the tide  
 Of light that lives in Heaven deep and wide  
 Rolls in, and bears a myriad glorious things,  
 And all its wealth upon the maiden flings.

For lo ! the Spring hath burst her chrysalis,  
 Life in her wings and rapture in her kiss :  
 And she hath flushed through all the dreary  
 woods

To touch and light them to a flame of buds ;

Her gleamy hand so brimmed with violets,  
Through her strained fingers here and there  
she lets

Them fall to grass, where amethyst they lie  
And watch her, each a sylvan spirit's eye :  
Intense reflections of her rainbow fans  
Start living bluebells when the light engrains,  
And primroses, and stars of golden glow  
Called celandine—the year hath ripened now !

Her little cottage on the border stands  
Of a great wood and high — with pasture  
lands

Unrolled beneath, whereto a lawny slope  
Inclines with many a softly rounded group  
Of brake gorse-goldened or foam-sprayed  
with may :

Both through the fronting wood, and far away,  
Her window looks ; to lustrous fields of  
grass

Hedge-girt, elm-dotted that the kine may  
pass

The midday heats there chewing mild the cud,  
With limp ear flapping tickling flies that stud ;  
To blossomed orchards, fallows loamy brown,  
Wheatfields and clover lessening to the town,  
The town smoke-nested with its abbey grey,  
On to horizons azure fused with day.

Bronze chestnut-buds, wrapped gummy as  
they grow,

Swelled fluffy, spilling with an overflow  
All unaware of flimsy tissue green,  
Little leaves crumpled, dress for fairy queen ;  
So all the trees a rarest mist o'ercrept  
Of verdure, and condensing daily swept  
Throughout the woodland ; tints impleaching  
wed,

Young oak-leaves chrysoberyl tinct with red.  
Glossy with oils that wait upon their birth ;  
While yon fresh beech-leaves moving as in  
mirth

Seem lithe to lie upon the delicate air  
As though too gross to let them sink it were,  
Fringed with a down as silky as may mist,  
When edgeways-lit, a lip that you have kissed :  
Green flakes of clustered vivid light they fell  
I deem upon the boughs, and oh ! how well

They're quenched with mutual shadows and  
relumed

Over and over ; note how gently gloomed  
And chequer-lit their pale smooth-rinded  
bole,

Even as the lichened bark where ivy stole.

Fresh scented fern at tips brown-scaled and  
twirled,

Fronds folded as an infant's toes are curled,  
Grows free amid the campion crimson-lake  
And where stellaria graceful-leaved doth  
shake,

While fleshy mushrooms rayed beneath with  
fawn,

Growth of a night, dot thick the dewy lawn.  
Dreamy the down of willow-catkin swims

In the mild sunlight ; shall we note the whims  
Of yon wee caterpillar hued like jade

On his silk subtle jewel-glimmered thread ?  
But now deep hides in many a hawthorn bush

A nest of pale eggs tiny with a blush  
And mottle of wine ; from lichens woven and  
moss,

Horsehair and bents and feathers, sheltering  
close

A mother chaffinch whose gay mate sits nigh  
And chirps to her—yon linnet dipping by

Sings as he flies, and perching on the ash  
A runnel long of melody doth flash

From him and wander through the woodland  
far,

Whose notes impetuous ecstatic war  
Which shall be first ; they hustle and they  
throng

As all the teeming Spring were in the song ;  
That little elf will utter forth the whole ;

Well may he quiver, and beyond control  
The rapture whirl him from the leafy shade

With shimmering wings adown the sunlit  
glade !

But he is not alone—hark ! trickling notes  
From the hid blackcap, tenderly there floats

Sweet cooing of the cuckoo and the dove,  
Clear pipes the blackbird, and a thrush's

love  
Flutes softer—hark ! the lark is in the blue

Whose music-sea the sunlight eddies through ;

With these the whitethroat, many a bird,  
 combines,  
 As if to shoot and cross a myriad lines  
 Of melody entangling all the soul,  
 And in a web of breathless bliss to roll.

In a warm haze the brakes are rounded soft;  
 A grey-green exhalation here aloft  
 They seem, with thinner edges luminous  
 Even as a cloud's: from their dusk hearts of  
 rose  
 And blackberry the cinnamon nightingales  
 Skim into sunlight gurgling amorous tales,  
 Or pensive call to her who darkling glows  
 Over their own live secret — where — he  
 knows!

All this and more—by so much as beside  
 The year teems with of flowers elfin-eyed,  
 And mosses fairy-branched of amber stems  
 All capped with fairy urns concealing gems  
 Of seed, a world to insects metal-sheened,  
 Lambs by their mothers frisking newly-  
 yeaned—

All this and more, commingled in the tide  
 Ever calm undulating far and wide  
 Of air and light in bounteousness sublime  
 And all exhaustless, as in former time,  
 Floats now about this humble cottage maid.  
 Rich should she be, though in mean weeds  
 arrayed:  
 Rich hath she been in flinging wide her  
 soul

To every humblest claimant of the whole:  
 And rich she is, although that sea in sooth  
 Of glory vainly sweeps and summons both  
 The closed and silent portal of her eye  
 And of her ear, as where deserted lie  
 Sea-lapped palace-walls blithe once with life;  
 But as in vain the ripple-lisp or strife  
 Of clamorous white surge would waken now  
 The sullen rock, so vainly woos the sun  
 And all Spring-voices calling to the stone  
 Of her dead sense whom God makes deaf  
 and blind!

Yet is He still the Father—and refined  
 Intensely grow the senses that are left,  
 Nor is the girl of touch and smell bereft;

So as she sits and leans out to the Spring,  
 She may not rush with bird-like wantoning  
 Into the woods as erst the child would do;  
 Yet still remain of channels one or two  
 Through which the living glory may invade:  
 Does there not wander in from garden and  
 glade

A wash of fragrance, honeysuckle scent,  
 Acacia or seringa myriad-blent,  
 Now this now that, and can she not feel cool  
 The downy breeze upon her forehead full?  
 Then these with magic wand shall summon all  
 Yea all the summer in her spirit's hall;  
 Exquisite vision something shadowy  
 Such as to Eden dreaming bards supply,  
 Such as to Milton blind dwelt ever nigh.  
 Imagination that forbids the sense  
 Explore some sweet lane's winding, tangle  
 dense,

Because she holds her fantasy more fair  
 Or dear than earth, Imagination rare  
 Is opening this blind girl's inner eye  
 To that near world whose fadeless beauties lie  
 Substance of ours that only bloom to die!

And once her fingers touched the raised type  
 Upon her knee, when lo! her mother's lip  
 Pressed to her forehead—then a radiant smile  
 Dawned on that wan blank face, as otherwhile  
 I saw a grey blank rock illumine dim  
 Through watery skies — though vain the  
 clamorous chime  
 Of surges and the flash of sea-birds, mark!  
 Heaven streams with pearl, deep smiles the  
 mountain dark!

She speaks, "O mother, wonderful to read  
 That He who calls Himself my friend indeed  
 Calls me His friend.—Can then the Master  
 need  
 Me as His friend? on this my spirit feed!"

## SUMMER CLOUDS AND A SWAN

Now in late Summer massy foliage  
 Shows dark and heavy, and the beechmast  
 browns  
 Yon lofty beeches of the smooth grey bole,

That stand upon a mossy turf which seems  
 To undulate as if with languid airs  
 Breathing beneath the glowing tapestry  
 Of moss now vivid now a sombre green.  
 The bank insensibly to water slopes,  
 A narrow tract of water with the banks  
 In easy hail of one another : I stand  
 Facing the grove beyond the narrow water  
 Nestled in lime-leaves murmurous with bees :  
 The water from my vantage-ground appears  
 A gleaming mirror for the banks and sky.  
 Ah ! what a sky ! in yonder hazy blue  
 Floats a white cloudlet shading into grey,  
 A drift of white soft-outlined bright and pure,  
 Letting the eye sink in luxuriously,  
 Duskling to fringe of delicate slate-grey  
 Most like a wing of blue-backed herring-gull  
 Dishevelled ruffled all the downy rim,  
 Silverly saturate and soaked with light,  
 Tranquilly floating in a blue profound.  
 Shored is yon skiey wash of paly blue  
 With fainter snow of vapours hazed from heat,  
 Subsiding dim with graduation fine  
 In that sky-water, as a mellow stroke  
 From some great bell to silence ebbs away,  
 Faints off, dissolves, and fails insensibly—  
 Their billowy bulky mass of mountain soiled  
 As with a tinge of copper and of brass ;  
 Their mounded subsidences here and there  
 Worn smooth with long abrasion of rich light  
 In streaming over, beams dissolved imbibed  
 In part while flowing, but in part flung free,  
 Swimming in shafts of pearl incumbent long  
 Upon the opalescent shadowy air,  
 Haunt of still angels floating restfully  
 Bound earthward upon ministries of love.

See yonder, mottled all the space with fleece  
 Or curdling milk or feather balls most fair,  
 Between them gulfs and channels of dim blue  
 Like sunny Alpine ice thin-oversnowed.  
 Some lawny mists move flimsy, letting filter  
 Blue heaven through them, even as shredding  
 foam  
 Wears airy grey bewraying a blue billow :  
 These radiate to nigh impalpable  
 Fan-rays long film-blown, fingered luminous  
 Of amorous air soft frolicsome and warm.

Lo ! there hath grown a fibrous length of  
 mist,  
 A delicate stalk faint-fuming into wealth  
 Of leafage, blossoming indefinite ;  
 A spine aerial radiating fine ;  
 Lucent plant-animal that loves the sea,  
 Expatiating still luxuriously  
 In the blue bath with feelers all abroad,  
 Glad unsuspecting free unreticent—  
 Long-reaching veinings in the gauzelike haze  
 Tenderly marbling the cerulean,  
 Now dense now rare like lawn we steep in  
 water.

How prodigal of lovely wayward change  
 Is cloudland subtle, silent, unaware,  
 Ravelling, unravelling tissues gossamer,  
 Not to be prisoned in colour or in word,  
 Pageant regarding not if any see !

Light of a stilly summer afternoon  
 Drowsy, voluptuous and sumptuous,  
 Rich, honey-heavy, sheeny, breathing balm !

Von beech-grove rises dark against the  
 light,  
 And o'er the beech-grove higher up the light  
 Climbs a tall hoary lanthorn-tower and spire ;  
 The light all tender with a pearly haze  
 Hued like thin fins and flanking of a fish  
 Fresh-netted live and shining with the wet—  
 While all the scene repeated lies below,  
 The tract of blue, the cloudwing floating there,  
 The faint snow shores, the finlike opal light,  
 And in it the beech-groves and loftier tower,  
 With through its belfry windows mullioned  
 The warm light glowing as in human eyes.

Now in the lower reflected gulf of blue  
 A swan sails tranquil with a stately neck  
 Arched long, with orange beak, and lifted  
 wing  
 Sail-like on either side, how soft and pure !  
 Have they not fallen these wings from yonder  
 blue,  
 Out of the soft white cloud there, so akin  
 They seem to it ! And O the tenderness  
 Of the blue shadow, scarcely shadow or blue,

Haunting yon dells of down behind the wing !

Surely the white cloud when it fell from heaven

Fell with the heavenly motion lingering in it,  
For do but note how tranquil and how still  
The cloud sails yonder and the swan sails here !

Yet lo ! a sudden impulse of the bosom  
Thrills all the placid water feeling it  
To dimpling smiles that waft luxurious light  
Into the pendulous faces of sweet flowers,  
Lush grasses, harebell, eyebright, sorrel leaves  
That fringe the flood whose heart enshrines them all.

While his dim double the swan floats upon  
Flickers beneath him with the twin-born ripple

From his breast sloping either side away,  
Melts like snow dropped in water, yet remains.

He ruffles yielding wavering images  
Of church and tree, and of the sky above,  
But all the fragments gather as he goes.  
Thus if a dream, a passing fancy, glide  
And mar thine image for a moment, Love,  
Within my heart, it glides and passes by ;  
But thou art, Love, mine own abiding sky,  
More undisturbed not faithfuller than I.

### AUTUMN IN IRELAND

CALM falls the evening : lo ! yon delicate ash,  
Whose smooth grey bole dark mossy tufts emboss,

Gloats with full foliage in the mellow light,  
Each slim leaf dainty dabbling in the glow  
And dallying with shadow subtly fine ;  
While underneath, thin shadow of a tree  
Branches upon a slope of lawn greengold  
Soft vague as veins meander, and allows  
A flow of gleam with gracious whim to stray  
About it gentle, yielding light-bubble.  
The foliage is paling yellowing  
And sheds to-day an amber scattering  
Upon the grass as if reflected there.

Below the lawn a billowy sweep of wood  
Pours to a glen and fills it fair and far  
With undulating topaz, chrysolite,  
Whose fervour quickens into ember-fire  
Anon or silent burn of tarnished gold,  
Into the hue wherewith the robin's breast  
Glow now in autumn perched in yonder ash  
And ruffling his full throat with melody.

Yon billowy leafage-river seems to pour  
And gather from afar insensibly,  
Where those vast mountains shadowy upheave  
Misted, uncertain, bathed in molten pearl,  
Robed in mild light of sweep magnificent  
With luminous folds of blue gloom inter-  
changed,  
Yet through the heavenly vesture half-  
betrayed

Their native tones of sombre olive-green,  
Rust-brown, or tint of the yew's inner rind.  
Behold yon kingly form with storm-beaten  
Yet dauntless everlasting rugged face  
Over huge shoulder of his brother there !  
The far-off mountain purples now with eve,  
Yields, melts his proud and stern solidity  
To vaporous amethyst that seems to poise,  
And brood on mingling with unbodied light.  
Anon he looks a vast anemone  
Translucent steeped in a clear sea of air,  
An air how supple soft and fathomless  
Enshrining all, here molten chrysolite,  
The inner hue of bursting chestnut sheaths  
What time the chestnut drops from leaf to leaf,  
There heaven for souls of vanished violets ;  
Wherein a crescent moon swims tilted high  
On end shell-frail, a shallop half submerged.

Calm falls the evening, tender every tone  
The mild air pillows ; only now and then  
Some flitting bird with irrepressible  
And innocent bliss brims over in the leaves,  
Song fragile fitful as the fitful gleam  
Of silken rainbow gossamer at hand  
A freckled spider swings from leaf to leaf.  
Such voices, and the hushed-with-distance  
call  
Of yonder torrent in the wooded glen,  
These only haunt the tranquil-hearted air,

Spirits benign congenial unto it.  
While I upon the moss extended lie,  
A fairy fir-forest of mazy moss,  
Noting some metal-sharded insect thrid  
Their labyrinths, and over the frail growth  
Of shamrock tiny, or fungus coral-red.

I know ye mountains ! tell what hollow  
lone

Or stern rocksteep of yours defies me long !  
I love ye all, love communing with all,  
Courting fair deadly face of danger, queen  
Among ye—timorous tepid-souled men  
Know not the fierce delight of meeting her  
With blanching cheek and loudly thumping  
heart,

Yet with teeth set, and will unconquerable—  
Beautiful spirit, playmate of the storm !  
Hard by the eagle's eyrie, when the eagle  
Sweeps brooding o'er it dauntless and un-  
moved

For all the rush of hurricane and scud  
Of torn grey cloudrack, poised on wing  
sublime ;

What time blind rain leaves slippery the stalks  
Of heather and bilberry in crevices  
Of giddy granite precipice, and scarce  
For drifting mist I see the rowan beads  
Or holly berries, clutching at their stems.

And ah ! what glories, secret treasures  
Of beauty and delight we come upon,  
Fresh, unfamiliar, where the gaze profane  
Of vulgar and unsympathising eyes  
Hath never fallen, blighting, tarnishing ;  
Unbreathed upon, unfingered as a flower  
Fresh budded from its sheath, imperaled with  
morn !

Howlight, how buoyant, all your breezes blow,  
Ye mountains ; how we bound upon your  
heath !

For illness, with the fretting cares of life,  
Unhealthful toil with books, and weary  
thought

Heaving through waste and wandering seas  
of doubt,

Hungering with unfathomable want ;  
Yea even the burden of some deadlier grief ;

All these like fevered dreams we fling from us,  
Sipping the sparkle of your liberal air !  
And now though, wounded climbing in your  
crag,

Awhile I may not move, my spirit roves  
Rejoicing still, while I serene as you  
Lie lapped like you in tranquil-waning light !

And thou fierce torrent in the wooded  
glen !

How often have I watched thee from a rock  
Hard by yon thunder-waterfall of thine,  
Thy crush of waters tawny as the mane  
Of some huge lion crashing like a fate  
With raucous roar on a dissolving doe,  
And foam resurgent vanishing like cloud  
'Mid swirl of bright delirious air-bubbles  
In splintering agate of the gulf profound,  
While fragile froth white, lacelike, delicate,  
Frills tremulous the waterworn grey stone,  
Ever blown out, and ever anon relit—  
Till in the spume some shadow seems to flit ;  
Nay ! solid thing of life, that unaware  
Leaps to my startled vision, leaps in air,  
Along the flashing cataract, a fish,  
A salmon opal-flanked and mottled fine  
It is back with shifting purple, to subside  
In the seethe baffled yet abide his time.

Ah ! splendid torrent, hast thou ne'er a  
soul,

Art thou no god as men were wont believe ?  
If not a god, yet verily and full  
Pulses in thee the universal God !  
Doth not thy full triumphant rush of life  
Inevitably leap up into me,  
Aching and thrilling inarticulate  
Till it can break in me to consciousness,  
To its own worship, love, and sympathy ?  
In solitude I blend my voice with thine,  
Shouting for brotherhood and fellowship !  
Insanely lust headlong to flash with thee,  
Or long to plunge, O lover ! in thy pools  
Shadowy, fathomless, contemplative,  
Dyed of the peat deep coffee ; fury-spume  
Indolent starring, clinging at the rock,  
Grey crag empurpled, hollowed-under, cloven  
With such long violent impunity.

Lo ! where the listless foam-fleck on the  
main  
'Mid-current dallies, seeming motionless ;  
Visibly now astir smooth slides along  
Von oily waterlapse ; glides giddily  
Anon to where, volumed like solid glass,  
The flood slips eager into the abyss,  
Fired with a parting sunkiss, passionate—  
To wander far, now strenuous now calm,  
Dreamy and listless under all the dense  
Impleached greenery of mossy wood,  
Twirling sere leaves, umbrageous and cool,  
Now smoke-cairngorm, now shallower jasper  
clear,  
Smiling when Day puts by the leaves to look  
And variegate with limpid tortoiseshell.

### THE GRANDMOTHER'S STORY

THIS afternoon I promised I would hear  
That story from the poor old lady near ;  
So, coming to the cottage there aloft  
That creepered stands within its little croft  
A stone's throw from the road, roofed in with  
thatch,  
I neared the garden-wicket, clicked the latch,  
Passed through sweet-william flowers and  
hollyhocks,  
Straw-plaited hives with bees in humming  
flocks ;  
Knocked and within found waiting me to  
greet  
A slight grey woman finely-featured, sweet,  
Yet clear and firm of aspect, simple, neat ;  
About her shoulders over the serge gown,  
Though it was warm, a worsted cape was  
thrown—

"You must forgive me if I weary you,  
For I am getting very old, you know ;  
I shall be seventy come Martinmas—  
Swift flies the current of our years that pass !  
Well I remember, 'twas a happy day ;  
We had persuaded him the holiday  
At home to spend, and take the weans to play  
With Mary and myself among the fern  
In Epping Forest, when the blazing burn

(The summer you may mind was hot and dry)  
Should cool assuaged from evening drawing  
nigh.

And John he drove our grey nag in the cart ;  
Ah ! how they teased, the little ones, to start !  
You know the beautiful tall beechen trees  
Nigh to the old toll-gate that was—a breeze  
Blew cool among them, and the lights and  
shades

Seemed merry as the children in the glades.  
Some cows were standing paunch-deep in the  
pool,

A rough dull-coated clumsy cart-horse, cool  
Bathing his thick fore-fetlocks only, let,  
After a draught, the water from his wet  
Lips either side pour streaming sleepily.  
The children watched him, and the goslings  
nigh,

A second brood downed yellow, with some  
geese,  
And nibbling sheep shorn of their woolly  
fleece.

John never seemed, I thought, more cheerful-  
like

And kindly—it was then we saw the shrike  
(We call it butcher-bird), and then he followed  
With Ned the eldest, where an elm is  
hollowed,

The mill-like tapping of a woodpecker—" "  
At this I questioned, interrupting her,  
Doubting how far the dear old dame would  
err :

"So it was then Mary began to ail?"  
"Nay," she replied, "mayhap a little pale  
Silent and weary she had seemed at first,  
But into spirits rapturous she burst  
When playing with the children in the wood :  
To see their romps ! I felt it did me good.  
I recollect the little sister saying  
(At hide-and-seek the younger two were  
playing)

'Now, Tom, I'm going to hide by yonder  
tree  
Among the fern, and you must look for me  
When you shall hear me calling out cuckoo !'  
And then away the little toddler flew  
To bury her wee face where covert grew

Of marestail and of fern, a forest small  
Within the forest, taller than them all;  
But bless you ! she was three year old and she  
Never surmised that any one could see  
If but her eyes were shut, and so she stole  
Ere calling but halfway within a hole  
Between some fronds that bordered open grass,  
And all might see the blue frock of the lass,  
Each bare leg tiny and her little shoon."

This I foresaw would not be ended soon,  
So gently coaxing her toward the goal  
I spoke again—"Well, I had gone to stroll  
Not far," the grandmother resuming spoke,  
"When I saw Mary coming near the oak  
Where I was resting, holding baby fast,  
Hushing and singing to it as she passed,  
Yet strangely breaking off into a prayer  
Wild incoherent, as of strong despair,  
Between the snatches of her lullaby :  
Conceive the shock it gave me ; plainly I  
Heard what she muttered, 'John is gone  
with HER !  
Little he cares about the woodpecker.'

"I knew the husband all too often failed  
In duty to my Mary, since she ailed  
Now many a day from harshness of the man ;  
Albeit in sooth the malady foreran  
In buried members of our family  
(My fear foreboded her not wholly free,  
Even from a girl) ; she wept unceasingly  
These later days indeed ; nor most I think  
From his brutality to her in drink,  
But for his wanton doings with the other :  
Gentle and true, poor thing, she could not  
smother

Hatred of that lewd woman handsome base,  
Who daily more encroached upon her place  
In her own house as in his fickle heart.  
And yet what smote her with the deadly smart  
Was this one day that made so fair a start  
Playing her false, betraying her to pain,  
She wellnigh foolish counted on the wane,  
Because he had been kinder for awhile ;  
The woman for a month gone many a mile :  
And he was gentler to the children small  
As to herself—that evening most of all

Kind he appeared and cheery—happiness  
Of dim-remembered years came nigh to bless,  
When they twain and the child beneath the  
sod,

Their pretty first-born, seemed alone with  
God,

Happy as those in heaven.—Sudden fell  
On her fresh-budding hope the blast from hell,  
Loathsome, abhorred, familiar too well.

The hated gleam she saw among the fern  
Of *her* red drapery ; which made her turn  
White cold, atremble, as the children told,  
Rising from playing with them in the gold  
Of silverweed and birdsfoot, fixing look  
Intently staring on the path he took  
Among thick hazels and low-blooming  
bramble :

But Tom, poor innocent, moved on a ramble  
That very way, spying a foxglove yonder,  
(Such a tall spire of spotted bells, a wonder !)   
When swift and shrill she screamed that he  
should stay :

'Stay here ! you dare not ! will you ne'er obey ?  
Not nigh that woman'—then she caught the  
child,

The little baby, with a gesture wild,  
Straining it to her, hurrying to me,  
Muttering singing incoherently."

She paused as weary, shedding even tears,  
Though all was over many many years ;  
So I besought her not to tell me more  
Nor idly stir the drowsy griefs of yore.

"I like to tell you, sad indeed yet sweet,  
Going all over, but 'tis hardly meet  
Much longer to detain you, and indeed  
For what remains there is but little need.  
Terrible journey home ! sad interval  
Till I all faint, fearing for what might fall  
On those wee children with the mother dazed  
(Frightful to see her fondling baby crazed !)  
On thorns both day and night, in anguish went  
With my poor Mary where she must be sent,  
The Doctor said ; where skilful dealing would  
Be likeliest, he thought, to work for good,  
If aught could cure, by severing her ways  
From all that mixed slow poison with her days.

"Well very soon, as I expected, he  
Brought home the woman, telling me that she  
Would cherish well the babes unmothered all,  
Since me myself my proper cares recall  
Home to the farm—those days you know I kept  
House for my son unwed, yet often stopt  
Over to Mary's ; it was very near ;  
And to my heart her babes were very dear.

"But need there was for me in Chelmsford  
town

Soon after far from them to bide ; and flown  
Were nigh four months before I could again  
Behold my children, howsoever fain.

And then indeed it made my heart to ache  
Seeing my babes—you know I could not take  
Them home, 'twas all impossible, but oh !  
They had not got their mother, don't you  
know.

A mother's love for her own little child,  
There's nought so strong, so holy, undefiled !  
Rosy and happy they would always look ;  
They were her first thought, and I seldom  
took

A walk their way, but I was sure to find  
Her at wee shirt or frock, or romping kind  
Tireless with one or all ; save when she plied  
Her other household tasks—(for she but lied,  
The other woman, when she spread abroad  
Her duties to her husband were ignored  
By Mary, though she made him think the  
same)—

But as to them, the children, when I came  
I found them all uncared-for, pining, pale ;  
I was quite sure their very food must fail,  
Unwashed, unkempt, ragged and slatternly,  
Poor darlings cherished late so tenderly !  
And with her always bitter, sharp and cross,  
They lost their childish spirits ; what a loss  
For little children ! Oft I found them crying :  
One cowed, sly, joyless ; peevish or defying  
Another grew, and far more quarrelsome—  
Starved of fair equal dealing, all that home  
With loving watchful service can provide,  
Starved in their poor hearts, and as ill-  
supplied

Small growing bodies with the needful food—  
I used to think that no one ever could

Maltreat, or even neglect, a little child,  
Enslaving us with sheerest weakness mild,  
Conquering with designless impotence,  
Pleading with all resistless eloquence  
Of humble sweet uplooking eyes and sense  
Of utter helplessness, implicit trust  
In you for all—could any woman thrust  
An innocent away, who made appeal  
With pleading shiftless geste, if she could feel ?  
Had she a heart deep in it must he steal,  
She not unmindful that herself once throve  
Frail pensioner upon a mother's love !  
Seeing the little girl alas ! I thought,  
How but two years ago I saved and bought  
Some wooden animals and other toys  
For her, and how quite weary with her joys  
One day I found her at my Mary's—there  
Was little Nelly in the cushion-chair  
In Mary's arms, who dared not breathe nor  
stir,

Though cramped and numb for fear of waking  
her :

Unaware dozing off to quiet sleep,  
Her dimpled, waxen little fingers keep  
A small white wooden cock, her favourite toy,  
Rosily loosely locked upon the joy—  
Open moist coral mouth, and flushing cheek !  
Where were they now ? timid and wan and  
weak

I found her—but to make my story short,  
Trustworthy news one day to me was brought  
That John was gone, had left both house and  
home,

And none knew where ; but over the sea-foam  
Somewhere abroad, mayhap Australia,  
The folk surmised : ' His little children are  
Left to that woman,' thus the neighbour said.  
' She will not keep them now the father's fled,  
But they must go into the workhouse nigh ;  
You cannot take them'—how in sooth  
could I !

(It seems that John and she had quarrelled  
sore,

Yet from his winnings she secured a store)  
So by the help of our good clergyman  
I carried out reluctantly the plan—  
I think it was a hard and cheerless life :  
One soon gave over the unequal strife ;

Harshness, neglect, poor food, too strong for her,  
 Poor little Nelly died—so happier !  
 The baby, that, you know, had died before.  
 But for the others, Tom and Ned, they bore  
 Up against all; and when I found the  
 leisure—  
 Hoping to give my poor lost child a pleasure,  
 And because Doctor Thomson said it might  
 Possibly set her wildered reason right  
 To see the children—on a holiday  
 I took them to their mother, far away.

“ Ah ! what a change—her scanty hair was  
 grey,  
 Late raven-black ; her face was gaunt and  
 drawn,  
 Once blithe and fresh and rosy as the dawn.  
 She knew us, yes she knew us, them and me ;  
 Yet not as figures from the past, you see,  
 Blent with old scenes, at most but vaguely  
 linked ;  
 Rather with that fire-atmosphere all tinct  
 She breathed, blent with her tortured wildered  
 being—  
 Hell, with but Death to slide the bolt for  
 fleeing !  
 She scared the little ones, holding them close  
 Embraced for long : and once indeed there  
 rose  
 Some of the Past faint blurred in front of her—  
 ‘ Nelly and baby, you must bring them here :  
 Well are they?—John would have come  
 earlier  
 To see me in my misery, but he  
 Must be long dead—I mind their telling me !’

. . . “ Well, have I more to tell? The boys  
 are here.  
 If Ned could get some situation near—  
 He’s old enough—you hear them shouting  
 now.  
 They and my sons three slung from bough  
 to bough  
 There in the apple orchard late a swing—  
 They let me have the boys out for a fling  
 Of pleasure now and then—they’re very well—  
 They like the dipping; why, I cannot tell ;

It turns me giddy looking—well, the young  
 I know ! and there’s the terrier barking  
 strong ;  
 When Neddy runs to push, he always will ;  
 Poor dog, some day he’s sure to come to ill !  
 I think that you can see them if you look ;  
 The casement is ajar ; ’tis nigh the brook  
 And gillyflowers—my apples will be rare  
 I fear this year, they do not promise fair.  
 ’Tis nearly time the children came to tea,  
 And I must make it : where’s the gooseberry  
 I promised little Mary?

Must you go?

You will be always welcome, Sir, you know !”

### ANOTHER VERSION

“ YET in his prime, of promise very full,  
 Truly a grievous fate !  
 Many sweet years along life’s way to cull  
 Young wedded folk may wait ;  
 They lived in one another ’tis averred”—  
 Pity ! yet I know more than they have heard.

He and the lady strolled into the wood  
 Where rose and bramble marry,  
 Nigh buried in the full fern as they stood,  
 While nightingales yet tarry,  
 A film of glinting silver on the deep  
 Green fronds that under in mild fire steep.

What silent sunlight-gushes in the grass,  
 Rich-breathing oily fern,  
 And sapful herbage flowering as they pass,  
 How the long-purples burn !  
 Languid the air with foamy elder-bloom,  
 Blue flies in shining summer wheel and boom.

Exuberant young lavish life of all  
 Their senses overflowed ;  
 Noting some leafage-softened sunlight fall  
 Where skins of satin glowed,  
 Thitherward thrilling hands of each instole,  
 And eye sought eye, and lip sought lip, for  
 goal.

Oh ! they had lightly dared the perilous slope  
 Smooth turf impending over,  
 Dallying playful ; now with ne'er a hope  
 Their guardian angels hover ;  
 His heart love-loyal yet to one at home,  
 Drugged with sense-fumes he palters there  
 with doom !

For search him through, no thought nor love  
 you find ;

In such a heat they sleep ;  
 One luscious hot dissolving sense doth blind  
 Fuse all their powers and steep ;  
 So bees men stupefy within the hive  
 Are reft of honey while they cease to live.

What angel may avert the triple loss  
 Of three poor human souls ?  
 But while they lie, in wood-sorrel across  
 From one of nearest boles  
 Flits flustering a brown bird from her nest,  
 By them shy startled in her innocent rest ;

And troubling both nigh brings the woman to,  
 So half awakening him  
 By her coy shrinking ; but they startle through  
 Now, for the silence dim  
 Ruffles with rustling very near their nook :  
 A girl with her wood-bundle while they look

Passes unseeing them, but as she goes  
 Lightly she hums an air  
 That stabs him as the dearest one of those  
 His bride in days that were  
 Was wont to sing ; she fades among the  
 leaves—  
 When lo ! a shriek the wood's green quiet  
 cleaves.

Breathless they listen till it shrills once more  
 Anguished, imploring, wild ;  
 He hurries eager from the woodland floor,  
 And now behold a child—  
 The girl three brutal men are dragging nigh ;  
 One kneels upon her frail form murderously.

“Quick ! help her !” cries the lady ; “they  
 are three ;  
 Nay rather let us fly !”

Fierce unaware by him assailed they flee,  
 Nor will the maiden die ;  
 But in the strife was dealt to *him* the blow  
 That stained him crimson and that laid him  
 low.

Yet he confided to me that he chose  
 Even in the moment's rush,  
 If this were Death, the friend, to clasp him  
 close,  
 And so avert the crush  
 Inevitable of a soul's undoing,  
 Whelming two loved ones in its own fell ruin.

So leaning on the faithful breast he waned,  
 Safe now from rending it,  
 Nor either gentle nature had sustained  
 Death from his fury-fit—  
 The selfish man die victim to his *love* !  
 Warm tears of bliss or sorrow shall it move ?

## CRADLE SONG FOR SUMMER

### I

SLEEP, my childie, sleep  
 I' the hush of evening deep,  
 Gone the last long-lingering beam  
 From where the tender violets dream  
 With closed eyes by the woodland stream :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

### II

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 Fresh dews of twilight creep  
 Through folded blooms of eglantine,  
 Speedwell and harebell and woodbine ;  
 Yet open the large white bugles shine :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

### III

Sleep, my childie, sleep.  
 Now dewy planets creep  
 Through skies of fading purple-rose,  
 Yon elm full-foliaged overflows  
 With those love-songs the blackbird knows :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## IV

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 Now drowsy birdies keep  
 More silence ; rare the cuckoo's note,  
 The dove's low plaint hath ceased to float,  
 Sweet breezes flutter in and out :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## V

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 The skimming moth may sip  
 Our bower's honeysuckle bloom  
 That lavish breathes a rare perfume,  
 I hear the velvet hornet boom :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## VI

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 The shepherd counts his sheep,  
 I hear the cattle browse and chew,  
 Afield the click of ball that flew  
 Bat-smitten and the boy's halloo :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## VII

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 Where meadow grass is deep,  
 Nor yet lies heaped the fragrant hay,  
 The crake is calling, or away  
 Where the corn mellows every day :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## VIII

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 Von primrose skies must keep  
 Some chime of faint and faëry bells  
 Whose ebb and flow of tidal swells  
 Or close or open aerial cells :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## IX

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 The summer breath can steep  
 All sights and sounds in hallowed rest ;  
 Beneath, far setting toward the West,  
 Rich seas of pasture swoon to mist :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## X

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 Rare doth the swallow sweep  
 Now liliated pools for dragon-flies,  
 Nor orange mouths that gape supplies  
 While the dam greets with twittering cries :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## XI

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 Still soft the martin-cheep  
 Below yon eaves from rustic nest  
 With moss and bents and feathers prest  
 Lined warm for many a downy breast  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## XII

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 Four callow fledglings peep  
 No more, but nestle to the wing,  
 Whose darkness ne'er to them can bring  
 Doubt of the parent's sheltering :  
 Sleep, my childie, sleep.

## XIII

Sleep, my childie, sleep ;  
 Our earthly clouds must weep  
 Their rain upon thy stainless brow ;  
 I only pray my child may know  
 Her Father's wing those shadows throw :  
 Then ever rest and sleep !

## LEONARDO'S CHRIST

## I

ONE came from forth the unquiet city glare ;  
 Brought heart unhallowed, hard and bitter  
 thought,  
 Dark pride, this passing world's vain restless  
 care ;  
 Which all his soul to unquiet fever wrought  
 With inarticulate moan for rest, for love :  
 Trod unaware the venerable hall  
 Where day kneels veiled—hushed gazers dare  
 not move—  
 Where that grand spirit traced upon the wall  
 A scene all deathless, though the flaking  
 colour fall.

## II

Came and was smitten and bowed, like him  
who rode

Of old so hot and proud till unaware  
The vision of a lowly Jesus glowed  
More strong than midday might on him to  
bear

Both soul and frame to earth, there silent  
laid

To list those clear sad loving accents say  
"Why persecute Me, Saul?"—Yon figure  
said

The like, he deemed, this weary one to-day,  
Yon midmost Form apart i' the pictured Life  
array.

## III

For there mid faces sharp new pain dis-  
tressed,

Each with his own life-look and features'  
play,

At that last meal sat One from whom the  
rest,

It seemed, withdrew, though but for grieved  
dismay,

Even now withdrew to leave him all alone,  
Yet not alone the Father being nigh :

For He the spell of gloom about them thrown  
From shadowing trouble near broke omi-  
nously,

And spake with low distinct yet quivering  
tone

"Of you shall one betray Me, chosen for  
my own."

## IV

And through yon faded scaling colours gazed,  
As through the veil of ages passed away,

And through heart-mist the wanderer's sight  
which hazed,

Those drooping eyes of melancholy ray,  
That worn sad face with selfless calm Divine,  
Pathetic air and gesture ; all again  
Spake those sad words—to *him*—"O friend  
of mine

Wilt thou betray? my love did never wane ;  
I told heart secrets to thee, led thee, soothed  
thy pain !"

## V

They ranged or grouped along the dusky stone  
Of pictured chamber wall, the Lord doth sit  
His head relieved against the tender tone  
Of landscape, far and deep light softening it,  
As ripening afternoon is wont to do

In yonder clime with kindly mellowing haze.  
To steep rude earth in his own glory-glow  
Grows gently sad the sun's triumphant blaze ;  
To near our world's chill mists he dims in  
coming low.

## VI

An emblem of His love, whose spirit shines  
Like yonder sun, calm pure and infinite,  
But through sweet law of its own life declines  
Toward our blind heart-broken world, His  
light

While glorifying shrouded low and sad  
Mid vapours dank of uncongenial sin  
From false faint hearts, souls fevered hot  
and mad

For pelf, power, fame ; about them pale  
and thin  
Spurned shivering poor, the weepers round  
their darling dead.

## VII

Day wore to eve from glad upspringing morn :  
His day wore on from that all-glorious prime  
When, holding Mary's hand, His steps were  
drawn

A little Child, at daybreak, evening time,  
To that near hollow where the cool well lies  
And women with their pitchers congregate ;  
Wore on from when the expanding youth for  
rise

Of sun mid Nazarean hills would wait  
With God-communing soul in dark un-  
fathomed eyes.

## VIII

Or lying where some homeless mountain air  
Strays sighing through sweet thyme and  
russet growth

Faint purpled, watched sun's blood-red orb  
from there

Sink in the ensanguined sea, suffusing both

Wide sky and earth with his own dying glow ;  
 Dark Carmel's promontory warmed to red,  
 Where long ago God's prophet did desire  
 From Heaven the flame, which fell while  
 shrieked and bled  
 False priests of Baal : all burned as with  
 heart of fire.

## IX

His Spirit grew into the mighty thought  
 Of countrymen, of all the world, at strife,  
 The slaves of Evil, to be wisdom taught  
 Less by wise precept than a selfless life :  
 His heart throbbed yearning to embrace the  
 whole :

He longed to be among them ; one by one  
 The features of his giant fabric stole  
 Forth from the gloom upon Him—like  
 yon sun  
 He saw His dying Love the world in glory  
 roll.

## X

All Carmel haunts of prophet, priest or sage,  
 The light of His self-sacrifice illumines ;  
 That ancient Love which breathes from age  
 to age  
 Life into all ; yet newborn youth assumes  
 From now a Man concentrates rays Divine  
 In His own soul and life ; so floods the  
 world !

He, focus of our light, shall ever shine  
 Till we, too wise for Love, His flag have  
 furled ;  
 Or mightier Sun arise to shame Love's pale  
 decline !

## XI

But shadow deepens now toward the close :  
 His spirit darkens with the coming doom,  
 While they in whom his heart had found  
 repose  
 Of sympathy in good fold close the gloom ;  
 For He who pours His very being forth  
 Divinely rich and pure for these must hear  
 These even now, so nigh the end, in wrath  
 Dispute pre-eminence : while deadly near  
 Looms Peter's base denial, — each one's  
 broken troth !

## XII

Dark, darker yet that anguish 'neath the  
 tree :

By torchlight lo ! the ghastly traitor's  
 kiss :

On to that inmost depth of agony

When God—'tis still the Father doing this—  
 His own hand draws before those filming eyes  
 To hide Himself—there in man's lowest  
 deep

Back thrusting sin's untasted cup He dies :

The blank dead face of that Eternal Sleep  
 His coming wakes to flush with solemn grand  
 surprise !

## XIII

And ever since that awful joy hath dwelt

Upon the dark long-dreaded face of Death ;  
 And ever since those dreary regions melt

In His self-sacrificing sunset breath :

But now it is the shadowing doom that  
 weighs

His spirit down : He gives the bread and  
 wine,

That they and multitudes His soul surveys

Of men unborn in ever lengthening line  
 May feed upon His love through all the  
 circling days—

## XIV

Ah ! passive hand, in life but raised to save,  
 They use thee cold to strike the wanderers  
 low !

Ah ! silent voice, all silent in the grave,

Thou tenderest breath of love in ear of  
 Woe !

Thou guardian wing must speed their shafts  
 of scorn,

Of hard harsh pride—O long-enduring  
 Lord,

Death holds not *Thee* ! Thou " from the dead  
 firstborn,"

Arise, and wield once more the flaming  
 sword,

That ne'er smote but the proud ; lift once  
 more them that mourn !

## A CONFESSION

SCENE.—A *Prison Cell*. PRISONER (*to*  
*Clergyman* *log*.)

"I SHOULD have known she never could be mine :

What was in me to hold a woman's love ?  
She, in the bloom of her transcendent youth,  
And I not even young and never fair,  
Nor like some brave or brilliant in wit.

Yet I adored her—ah ! she trod upon  
So many gay silk cloaks obeisant laid  
'Neath her queen feet, 'twas condescension  
deep

For her to walk upon my garment worn.  
How should she stay to ponder the gallants  
Had much such raiment stored in cedar-  
presses

And lavish strewed for other feet than hers,  
While this poor cloak I laid for her, this love  
Of mine, it was my all, and all for her ?  
Yet, had I felt her shudder as she gave  
Herself to me ! but sweet she seemed and  
bland

As ever—well I knew she could not love  
As I loved her, I never looked for that—  
So very little had contented me.  
Attar of roses,—only a drop of it  
Outperfumes floods of common essences.  
But she averred—I see her sitting now  
Brodering silk and gold in delicate kid  
With dainty fingers, lifting, ah ! those eyes  
Soft as horizons in the summer time,  
Answering in that low sweet tone of hers—  
That long her heart had been my own ; she  
feared

I cared not for her since I did not speak.  
And I, who hardly dared to lift mine eyes,  
But stammered shuffling awkwardly before her  
Praying her leave me but a little hope,  
Thus caught up unaware to paradise !  
First I was stunned incredulous with joy,  
And broke to foolish tears like some big child,  
Shy touching her ; and then because she  
smiled

So placid, half amused I fancied, fear

She might be sporting with me struck me faint.  
I said it, but she kissed away my doubt ;  
And yet I felt a secret want, a chill,  
Through all her kindness—nay, it must be so,  
Ever I whispered to my yearning heart ;  
She loves, even she, loves me, and only me.  
I cannot fathom what she wanted now—  
Oh could it be the paltry manor-house ?  
Was she not sure I would have laid the whole,  
All toil-worn earnings of my father's life  
And mine, if she had hinted what she craved,  
All at her feet ? Ah ! could it e'er behove,  
Reaching for bubble vanities like these,  
To tread upon a fond man's living heart ?  
But they who warped her gentle sinless soul,  
Trailed earthward its young shoot assiduous  
Lest it should Godward grow as it desired,  
Respectable, smooth, pious, and accurst,  
They are to blame—not thou, my murdered  
love !

Well I was heavy, taciturn, I know,  
No meet companion for a sylph like her.  
I went about my work ; from morn till night  
I toiled for her and for the little ones.  
Two babes were ours, a little girl and boy.  
I thought of little but my work and them,  
And in the evenings jaded with my toil  
From the black town preoccupied I came.  
How sweet the faces of my darlings then !  
Yet cares were on me, care for my beloved.  
Such sordid topics could not be for her  
To share the weary burden of with me,  
Who lived for music and embroidery,  
Deft tracing tasteful ornamental work  
For some bazaar or cyphers intricate,  
Chatting with friends or dancing at a ball.  
I dull and weary sitting in the room,  
Only a few feet far from her in flesh,  
In spirit felt her myriad leagues away—  
She had so little heed for what absorbed  
Me more and more, and weighed me down  
in dust.

And I, alas ! in my armchair I slept  
While she was playing brilliant passages  
Or quavering through the last new opera  
By Verdi. Hard she seemed to me and cold  
Contemtpuous familiarity,  
That rust of love marriage may generate,

Enhanced with her by lowly estimate  
(Too well deserved) of my so homely wit,  
I felt in her demeanour shivering ;  
Sluggish and dull to her ærial games,  
A mayfly with a crawling snail for mate.

“ But once I, forcing my slow brain to think  
Of something she would like that I could bring  
Home for her from the town, had sacrificed  
A scheme long cherished, and so bought for her  
A necklace I had heard her longing for :  
And then I think—yes, Sir, I do believe  
She loved me when I took it from the case—  
Not the bright bauble, but the man who gave !  
She looked and flung herself upon me, Sir,  
Tears in her sun-laugh : ‘ I was very good :  
She wished she were a better wife to me.’  
With choking voice I only made reply,  
‘ You do then love me : is it true indeed ?’  
‘ Oh, John !’ she faltered hiding her in me :  
And then I blessed my desolate barren life  
For holding in its weary waste of sand  
This blessed moment : here at home you know  
Lightly we value our abundant wells ;  
But once I heard a traveller from the East  
Describe a desert march interminable  
Through scorching sand—the rapture of the  
drone  
Of distant waterwheels upon his ear,  
The cool and liquid flash upon his eye  
Of spilling water from revolving jars  
Sleeked with acacia shadows as they stirred !

“ Yet even in such a trifle I was slow  
Shrewdly to guess what thing she fancied  
most.

My mind was smothered in the moil accurst,  
And if she asked me, that was not the same.  
But now I forced myself to cross her whim  
Many a time for fear of what might chance  
In ruin of my fortune waning fast.  
Once hinting somewhat of my fear to her,  
She but replied I looked the gloomy side,  
The Bible said despondency was sin ;  
Business she hated, could not comprehend.  
Therefore I plodded on, hiding with care  
The twin-woes feeding ever insatiable  
Upon the vitals of my tortured breast.

“ Well, Sir, among her gay acquaintances  
Who played and sang and chatted often with  
her

Was that—the person whom I need not name.  
Handsome and gay and brilliant I believe :  
I used to think, I owned it to myself,  
Nature had moulded them for one another.  
Not her for me—and if not her, not any !  
Who should be mine in yonder world or this  
If not my darling ? but I trusted her,  
Utterly blindly then I trusted her.  
Yes, I was blind, old dotard, a fond fool ;  
(But love *is* blind), until a ‘ friend sincere ’  
Hinted a warning : I indignant flushed,  
Plucked forth the barb and flung it in his face.  
But I suppose it rankled unaware :  
I caught myself at hovering nigh the pair  
With wistful eyes, till once I somewhat saw  
Which startled me to faintness with the shock  
Of half-incredulous wonder and dismay.  
But then a horrid fascination drew  
Me to peer closer—many a trifle now  
Fraught with keen anguish to my sickened  
heart.

“ One afternoon, I well remember it,  
Our little girl was playing with my beard,  
Climbed frolicsome on father’s mountain  
knee,  
In a sweet arbour of our shaven lawn,  
A summer evening ; and her mother came  
Round on us unaware, and sitting nigh  
How beautiful she looked, the sun upon her,  
Through green festooning of the lush wood-  
bine  
Sleeking her curls and dainty waist and foot !  
The child cried, ‘ Let me go, I want  
mamma ;’

I murmured in my agony of spirit,  
Still yearning to her, bleeding for her sin  
And treachery, nor holding it full-proven,  
Half to myself and half for her to hear,  
‘ Your darling lovely naughtiest mamma !’  
She wincing looked with such a scared white  
look

I see it now, and shudder seeing it ;  
For ah ! there was no ruth, no lingering scent  
Of what might once have been a love for me ;

It was mere scare; it took away my hope,  
I think—not all—hope heaved and fluttered  
yet.

The child with poor dazed face betwixt us  
two

Said piteous, 'Mamma, you are not naughty;'  
Yet at her terrible white abstracted look  
Returned and hid her face in me and cried.  
But soon the mother rose, and sitting by me  
Took my cold hand and feigning to be gay  
Questioned me 'what I meant? what could  
I mean?

She thought I must be dreaming, not myself,  
At least she craved to know my secret thought.  
What had she done? She would explain it all  
If I would tell her; but I looked her through,  
And shut my lips; I could not say it out;  
Yet tried to smile (I doubt a withered smile),  
And passed my hand athwart my throbbing  
brow,

And stammered I believed that I was ill,  
And she had seemed so cold of late to me.  
Of course she probed me little satisfied;  
But I was silent: no proof positive  
Was mine: how bring myself to charge  
disgrace,

Dishonour upon the idol of my life?  
Preoccupied that evening she appeared,  
Yet strove to seem affectionate and kind,  
Attentive and considerate for me.  
There was a certain pleading in her eyes  
And movement bringing me my cup of tea  
That touched me in my stunned bewilderment,  
Recalling soft the blessed year of trust  
When I lay childlike pillowed on her breast,  
Marvelling God should lend His seraph to me.  
You've seen a huge trunk lying prone and bare  
With sappy layers concentric where 'twas  
hewn

Grown dry and soiled, yet through the  
wrinkled bark

Will creep some budding twigs at breath of  
spring;

So my heart budded at her look and touch.

"But then there lowers the nightmare  
horrible—

Well, in the dark, Sir, when we lay in bed

Abrupt she blurted her confession out—  
Not tremulous sobbing, weeping tears of blood,  
Ah! no—in hesitating tones she spoke,  
Yet slow and measured, in deliberate choice  
It seemed of phrase appropriate, as though  
A task oppressive weary burdensome  
Herself or some third person imposed on her.  
'Something had lain upon her conscience  
long:

She saw I knew it, had been near the telling:  
She was about to pray me to forgive;  
And it was very wicked to deceive  
Me who had been so very good to her—  
Yet when I knew the whole she trusted I,  
Tender and generous-hearted, would forgive.'  
Ah! Sir, to cling convulsive to a tuft  
Over a precipice and feel it give!

To lean secure with all your soul upon  
One bosom, and for it to let you down  
Crumbling to dust, a bosom of the dead!  
When she began to speak I now recall  
I shook as with an ague turning cold.  
God! did she fancy that my heart was wood,  
So leisurely she fixed and screwed within it  
The cruel bradawl of her measured words?

Mere phrases of remorse conventional,  
No love! scant pity—weak and stupid I  
Docile and generous and submissive to her—  
Did her indifference to me and contempt  
Go length of holding me an idiot mild  
With not a man's heart or intelligence?  
Because I could not trill duets with her,  
Or spin her sentimental versicles,  
Illuminate her prayer-book, almanac,  
Because I was not smooth and rose-coloured  
Like any woman, nor Adonis-limbed,  
Was that a proof I had no power to feel,  
That I, just God! was not a living man,  
Whate'er the fashion's popinjay might be?  
A human life spilt shivered at her feet  
And tingling with blest sense of scope ful-  
filled

Exhaling there its costly fragrantcy!  
Such a devotion even God in Heaven  
Accounts no refuse, claiming for His own.  
It was not she to spurn me—it was God!  
Nay, but He uses for our punishment  
Those very idols we have dared enthrone!

"There I lay suffering, all her cruel words  
Cutting me keen like flying spikes of ice,  
Until when she avowed (more self-composed  
And calm with talk) abysms of treachery  
My ghastliest suspicion never plumbed,  
I think, I verily believe, that reason  
Fell swooning from her seat, and then the devil  
Took full possession of my tortured soul—  
I rose up a mere maniac with blind  
Lust to crush out the thing that tortured me :  
My fingers clutched her delicate soft throat,  
And tightened, tightened, like a vice in it.  
The paroxysm past I sank again  
Exhausted on the pillow all confused.  
How long I lay I know not, but the truth  
Of what had chanced shaped horrible itself  
Slowly before me in the lurid gloom.  
That moment how I hated her—yet soon  
I fell to wondering why she lay so still.  
I only knew I had been violent  
With her, yet not too brutal, even now  
I hoped relenting—then I listened intent—  
A sickening fear pressed suddenly upon me !  
Why does she lie so quiet that her breath  
I cannot hear ! I have not *killed* her—no—  
Impossible ! she means to frighten me  
For my unmanly violence but now.  
After awhile I shyly touched her brow—  
Great Heaven ! it is clammy, it is cold :  
I shudder, daring not to feel again.  
I cannot, will not credit *that* can be.  
I kill her ! I ! Cruel to frighten me,  
Cruel again—I call her under breath,  
Then louder, tenderly, and soft again  
I breathed her blessed name—without reply.

"I will not add another sin to this,  
I thought : my death is sure remaining here.  
I expiate my crime before the world,  
Then follow ner—we meet before the Just.  
But I went cowering to the window nigh—  
Wherefore I know not—it was early dawn ;  
Our casement was ajar ; some birds awoke  
In our near trees ; one lark broke up the  
grey—  
The dawning of our honeymoon's first night  
When I had crept thus to enjoy the dawn  
And soft air fragrant with the scent of hay !

(Only last year we played in yonder hay  
She and I with the little ones together).  
The cattle couched upon the dewy lawn,  
Our near church-spire in quiet chrysolite  
Among the waning stars where she is gone—  
My darling slept then with her pretty face  
In her child-hand, and long I watched her lie—  
And now, my God ! my love has brought to  
this

The only thing my love was set upon.  
But all I touched I ruined when I touched,  
And one long foredoomed failure is my life.  
Why was I born ? And yet there is a God—  
An awkward child my favourite toys I broke,  
And boyish games I spoiled wherein I played,  
In business ruined others and myself !  
I covered up the marred but precious face ;  
And when they stirred about the house, I called  
And told them I had done it, and again  
Sat by the darling body, feeling glad  
That she and I were now at peace for ever.  
The problem so insoluble to me,  
The weary problem of this tangled life,  
I fingered but to tangle more hopelessly,  
Is nigh the solving : I have let it rest :  
Nothing can come between us any more.  
Tell me, Sir, as a clergyman, your thought.  
Sometimes it seems the more I ponder it  
That, now the brutal frenzy-fit has passed  
From me for ever, and the moment dire  
Of her death-anguish passed away from her.  
Her spirit, sloughing off the film obscure  
Of earth upon her eyes, beholds at last  
The man I am, the bottomless abyss  
Of all my love for her—from agony  
Emergent saw, and seeing loved at last,  
The man so loving that he murdered her  
At the first shock of feeling that his love,  
The priceless treasure of his boundless love,  
Lay dropt unseen, unheeded underfoot.  
She did not know me, did not understand :  
That will be changed there—now her eyes  
are open,  
I think she waits to fall upon my breast  
Radiant now with all the love I craved,  
Announcing God the loving hath forgiven  
Both His poor wildered children who have  
sinned !"

## A CHILD'S FUNERAL

No passer in the strait and dreary road  
 By hedgerows dank with rain :  
 From dusk low clouds the rain unceasing  
 flowed  
 And the wind blew amain.

Only a little coffin borne of four  
 With two to mourn—none other  
 Follow as mourners through the windy pour,  
 The father and the mother.

A little pall is floating black and white,  
 The mourners' faces set  
 Upon the ground as though they envied quite  
 Their lifeless baby pet.

They do not feel the chill and soaking crape ;  
 But the tilting to and fro  
 They feel of that cold helpless baby shape  
 As the careless bearers go.

Ah ! where the gambols of his bounding limbs  
 Buoyant with springing life ?  
 Sweet light-and-shadow chase of baby whims,  
 Laughter and tears at strife ?

No more again will patter tiny feet  
 In his bright nursery,  
 No innocent prattle of his will hinder sweet  
 The day's dull drudgery.

Ah ! pouting of his roselips for a kiss,  
 And dimpled arms that clung—  
 Trifles, for him a marvel and a bliss  
 To name with lisping tongue !

I follow to the little grave at hand,  
 I hear the griding rope,  
 And shuffling feet of them that lowering stand,  
 And those grand words of hope.

The parents look as though the rope did gride  
 Their sinking hearts about,  
 As if on them the earth were thrown to hide  
 And from the light shut out.

But once methinks the mother, raising eyes  
 As those grand words she hears  
 Read from the Holy Book to murky skies,  
 Light breaks behind the tears,

And feeds for her some shy emerging bow :  
 The father's face I see  
 Is dark and hopeless, though his spirit know  
 Divine the mystery.

But he will wind a man's strong arm about  
 The woman faltering :  
 They, since their life's wee fire has dwindled  
 out,  
 For warmth more close will cling.

## SONG

"I WENT, DEAR, BY THE BROOK  
 TO-DAY"

## I

I WENT, dear, by the brook to-day,  
 The little brook was dry,  
 No shoals flash fair in a sunny ray  
 Shooting the shallow nigh,  
 Nor silverly clinks the crystal free  
 As the startled minnows fly.

## II

Our one wild apple above the pool  
 Hath yielded blossoms long  
 To gleamy water lingering cool,  
 Birds weary now of song,  
 No winged blue halcyon flits with glee  
 Green bulrushes among.

## III

Only a teasel moves a flower  
 And a languid meadowsweet,  
 Dull leaves are thirsting for a shower,  
 Blue airs are pale with heat.  
 Ah ! never again by the brook with me  
 Thy fairy foot may fleet !

## IV

There is no water in the brook  
 Nor any rosy bloom,  
 Music and rain the leaves forsook—  
 And thou hast left in gloom  
 A heart that yearns, O love, to thee  
 Over the far sea-foam.

## MINNIE

MINNIE ! our Minnie ! did I ever tell  
 About the morning of the day she went ?  
 Knee-deep in marigolds, the sunlight fell  
 On lilac frock and gold enravement  
 Of mistlike hair,  
 And cherub-fair  
 Face, with blue eyes of merry wonderment.

She stood as gaily listening intent,  
 Clapping babe-dimpled hands with tender  
 stroke ;  
 While forward arch her little head she bent,  
 "That was Papa's voice ; it was he that  
 spoke,  
 Called ' Minnie, dear !'  
 I heard him clear"—  
 No voice but hers the summer stillness woke.

"Nay, darling, you mistook ; Papa's away,  
 I answered, "far from here across the sea."  
 Dreamy she looked ; "Mayhap he came  
 to-day.  
 And he has brought some pretty thing  
 for me.  
 He called, I know ;  
 O let me go,  
 Mamma, I'm sure he wants me on his knee !"

"He may have called, perchance, from very  
 far ;  
 Come, dearest, come away, and look for  
 him !"

No sound I heard, and he was in the war ;  
 I wondered at the little maiden's whim.  
 My musing fell  
 On Samuel,  
 The child who thought Eli was calling him.

You know who called him ! . . . well, that  
 very night  
 Our little one lay in her little cot  
 Dead, scathed with lightning, like an angel  
 white,  
 Her face unspoiled . . . He would have  
 called her not  
 Away from me,  
 Unless that He  
 Some lovelier thing for his wee lamb had got !

## THE TWO FRIENDS

FAST friends at school two maidens grew,  
 And wintry age still found them true,  
 Ellen of gentle clinging mould,  
 And Maud who seemed reserved and cold.  
 Maud loved to question why and how,  
 What men are taught all-keen to know,  
 Yet learned with graceful modesty  
 And blushed to make some wise reply.

But Ellen, she was formed for love,  
 More soft than softest airs that move  
 Instinct with cooings from the grove.  
 Once only, yet a girl, she loved  
 A midshipman, who sailed and roved  
 O'er half the world, but kept as leal  
 A heart as when he used to kneel  
 An infant by his mother's side.

Yet he was poor : a guardian's pride  
 And shallow fondness often urge  
 Of him who sweeps the alien surge—  
 And in his lonely nightwatch sees  
 Her face in phosphor-foam that flees,  
 But loves yon stars best, for they keep  
 Blest eyes upon her innocent sleep—  
 That boys are fickle roaming far,  
 That greater, wealthier suitors are  
 Here at her feet—but sensitive  
 To love as little flowers that give  
 Their closest secrets to the morn  
 At his first kiss, and shut forlorn  
 Their crimson tips when skies are grey,  
 Where conscience sheds no doubtful ray  
 This tender woman from her way  
 Not prayers nor fires may tempt to stray.

And so she waits for weary years ;  
 And since she cannot bend with tears  
 Hearts warped by worldliness, they hold  
 A solemn council as they fold,  
 These lovers with their sacred love,  
 Who bids them, would they worthy prove,  
 Forsake the world to follow Him ;  
 So Maud with vision suffused and dim  
 In part from joy, in part maybe  
 From some dim hungering jealousy,  
 Receives the fugitives, whose home  
 Their home with her shall hence become.  
 He grows a leader in the state,  
 While all her life is consecrate  
 To cheer him wearied oft, and tend  
 Fair infants God to them may lend.  
 The sick and poor around her bless  
 Her grace of human tenderness,  
 While men, half-hearted foes of wrong,  
 With her wax chivalrous and strong,  
 Though worldlings shun with coward sense  
 Her dauntless front of innocence.  
 At noble deeds her heart would bound  
 As a war-horse at the trumpet's sound ;  
 And glories of the earth and air  
 Her limpid spirit mirrors fair—  
 Nor only shrines them, since they don  
 Fresh forms and lovelier every one  
 From sprouting seedlike in her soul ;  
 Till carols of the Spring-bird roll  
 From her white throat in human strain  
 More rare to nature given again ;  
 She feels the blossomed landscape wane  
 Hued like young wheat-bloom through the  
     boughs  
 Of foliaged oaks, and placid cows  
 In lustrous cowslip-meadows lie,  
 One lapse of light the river nigh ;  
 And lo ! such landscapes of our land  
 Glow new-born 'neath her fairy hand  
 Creating—even as bees who dive  
 In flower-sweets their own to hive.  
 But when the West grew all suffused  
 With sunset, and the farms were fused  
 With their own orchards on the hill,  
 The murmurous water-wheel stood still  
 Beside the bridge in yonder vale,  
 Nor yet the cushat plainings fail,

Then would she through the open door  
 That opened on the lawn outpour  
 A mystic organ harmony  
 So dreamlike over earth and sky  
 That in dusk woods wee birds that doze  
 Sank deeper into sweet repose :  
 While Maud hung over her, or drank  
 That music as the twilight sank  
 Upon the terrace walk, until  
 The fluttering white robe would fill  
 Her grateful sight, till Ellen came  
 And her pale spirit-brow the flame  
 Of a young moon kissed sisterly ;  
 Maud asked no heaven, with Ellen by.

Men called her somewhat cold and stern ;  
 On blatant folly she could turn  
 Severely—not for her the looks  
 Of amorous men ; in learned books  
 Immersed she seemed, and yet she kept  
 A nook of heart where Ellen crept  
 So warm the love of common wives  
 Were pale, methinks, to that which lives  
 In this stern woman for her friend.  
 If Ellen absent do not send  
 By every mail some word that bears  
 On her own self, tells how she fares,  
 Even the very dress she wears,  
 That Maud may image her distinct,  
 The daily drudgeries have linked  
 With them no joy for Maud ; she droops,  
 And only for to-morrow hopes.

The little ones had asked a boon  
 One balmy summer afternoon  
 When they and Ellen and her lord  
 To spend what days he might afford  
 From public duties here with Maud  
 Had come : the children eager prayed  
 That where by Maud's command was  
     made  
 Up high among the chestnut boughs,  
 Where the breeze freshly stirs and sougths,  
 What Maud had called a children's nest  
 (Not stern to them the weans confessed)  
 With nailed sawn branch and stairs that  
     wound  
 About the grey trunk from the ground,

That here at tea-time should be spread  
 Their evening meal—and here new bread,  
 Fresh pats of butter, milk that foamed,  
 Huge strawberries ripe crimson-domed,  
 In porcelain translucent slight  
 As eggs the shy wildbird by flight  
 In her moss nest reveals to light,  
 And other dainties, on the rude  
 Plank of a table tempting stood.  
 The children feasted, Ellen by  
 Aglow with their felicity,  
 While light and shade from flickering  
 leaves  
 Soft chequerwork about them weaves ;  
 Then gamesome through the woods they  
 run,  
 Their shadows in the westering sun  
 Slow-lengthening, and laugh and pull  
 The bluebells, what a basketful !  
 And Maud and Ellen wander too,  
 While notes of rapture filter through  
 The leafage as from Heaven's blue ;  
 So arm in arm they wander home,  
 But in the after sunset gloom  
 Out on the dusky dewy lawn  
 Those dulcet organ-tones are borne.

So time wears on ; Maud's late brown  
 hair  
 Is streaked with grey, though not the  
 fair  
 Of Ellen's in its gleamy fold ;  
 And she is absent, as of old.  
 But now so far her dwelling-place  
 Long linger letters o'er the space.  
 Her health has ailed, and friends advise  
 For her the warmth of southern skies ;  
 But thrice the welcome echoing horn  
 Has thrilled Maud in the sunny morn ;  
 She knows yon bluff mail-guard may bear  
 The writing that she holds so dear—  
 Each morn a blank—her heart feels faint,  
 Yet never makes she open plaint.  
 At length, 'mongst others, rimmed with  
 black  
 A letter comes—not *hers*—and back  
 The blood ebbs sudden from her face ;  
 Some dizzy darkness doth efface

The happy day ; she dares not read—  
 She knows all day for her is dead.  
 And yet the record is of peace,  
 Of life still lapsing till it cease,  
 And our few fretful bubbles die  
 In fathomless tranquillity !  
 Herself had told of orange-groves  
 Beneath the window that she loves,  
 Whence she can look upon the main  
 Rich velvet-blue with ne'er a stain.  
 O'erarched with sapphire crystalline  
 Pale blending in horizons fine :  
 The letter adds that there she lay,  
 And with each rising of the day  
 Fresh-crowned with youth's immortal ray  
 A little more she fades away,  
 Albeit the strong man sobbing pray :  
 Close to her window, damp the brow,  
 Faint to the dim eye waneth now  
 Yon far seablu, and soft warm air  
 To failing sense doth fragrance bear  
 Of her dear garden ; till so calm  
 She passed it seemed that air of balm  
 Lured sisterlike her gentle sprite  
 To flutter with it into light.  
 The end to Ellen came serene ;  
 Death was on Jesus' breast to lean  
 After life's supper by Him spread—  
 Maud only felt that she was dead.

They said her friend was gone before ;  
 She felt she would not see her more.  
 She did her duties as of old,  
 But all her face looked grey and cold.  
 Some glow with their own spirit's heat,  
 Their joy full-pulsed will ever beat  
 And kindle dullest clouds that stain  
 Till sorrow burns in glory's train ;  
 But some for joy do much depend  
 On what these favoured spirits lend,  
 And like a snow-alp Maud grew wan  
 When Ellen sank who was her sun.  
 Nor had she left a friend to stir  
 The healing fount of tears for her ;  
 For then with broken whispers they,  
 Naming the one beloved who lay  
 In darkness yonder, surely could  
 Ease each her solitary load.

To lose one only friend is loss—  
Is loss of all—and ne'er would cross  
Maud's lips from now that sacred name :  
But Ellen's sunny room the same  
As when she left it stays, all fair  
And only waiting Ellen there  
As Maud has decked ; she keeps the  
key ;

None ever enter there but she  
At night when all sleeps tranquilly,  
If weeping there are none to see.  
Each little trifle lying out  
'Gainst Ellen's coming spread about  
She has been wont how oft ! to use ;  
Maud even her favourite flowers renews.  
And as to name the lost none dare,  
So from the dark day Maud can bear  
No stranger hand to touch the keys  
Whose organ-tones upon the breeze  
Were wont at evening time to float,  
Nor have the hushed woods heard a note  
Since Ellen went ; but in her room  
Maud lives in ever lonely gloom,  
Her heart in Ellen's foreign tomb.  
Scarce would she see a human face  
Unless for duty.

But the place  
In later years one visited :  
Nor knew that sacred to the dead  
Maud kept the organ—waiting there,  
And finding music many a year  
Laid by disused as it was left  
By Ellen, took it up and cleft  
The long years' silence with a strain  
That Maud of yore had been more fain  
To listen for than any one,  
When happy day's bright current on  
With lapse insensible had flown.  
And it was such a summer-eve,  
Fair as those were, and Maud to leave  
Her solitary chamber thought,  
For evening's peace within her wrought  
Some peace of spirit, and she felt  
As Ellen's spirit with her dwelt—  
When lo ! once more the organ breathes,  
And as she trembling stands enwreathes  
Her numb and wounded heart once more  
As in dear faded eves of yore

With old familiar arms of love—  
As if such grief found power to move  
At last the daisy-sprinkled dead  
To turn and yearn to it and spread  
Wide arms of love to fold us round  
For all the deep sleep underground !  
To Maud that organ-voice had grown  
As Ellen's voice, her very own,  
Rare breathings from her secret soul :  
Who now but Ellen's self should roll  
To-night the old weird harmonies  
So faintly breathed as from the skies  
To call the sweet mist in the eyes ?  
“ And is she come herself again ?  
Even in God's very smile my pain  
Like a vague shadow flitted o'er  
Her basking spirit, and it bore  
Her down a moment, ah ! not more  
An angel than she was of yore ! ”  
She weeps but quiet tears and sweet  
While silent steals she down and fleet,  
So noiseless entering the player  
Plays on, nor dreams that she is there.  
She stands in deepening twilight, now  
The old low melancholy flow  
Of wind is in the elms ; through tears  
Afar through twilight vague appears  
The figure playing, she could deem  
It is the Ellen of her dream !  
She knows she dreams, yet loves too well  
To let the dear illusion dwell ;  
Until at last so mighty throbs  
Her pent emotion that she sobs  
Aloof, and startling causes turn  
The player, who views amazed the stern  
Pale woman shaken thus with grief—  
Ah ! healthful tears, ye bring relief.

“ Go on ” she murmurs and she prays  
For all the music Ellen plays.  
So from that day God eased her load,  
And more submissively she trod  
Her lonely way, and comfort sought  
In those sweet works that Ellen wrought,  
Through intercourse with many poor,  
Who bless her now she is no more.  
She fell on sleep with hope the while  
One face would on her waking smile.

MENCHERES

A VISION OF OLD EGYPT<sup>1</sup>

I

METHOUGHT I floated on the ancient Nile  
'Neath an abrupt and weird craggy pile,  
Its flame-hued cliffs caverned with many a  
tomb,

Haunt of lone winds and birds of dusky plume.  
A boat with monks that chaunted floated nigh;  
But when they paused, some awful far reply  
Came ever from the mountain's heart: one  
said,

"A voice from old-world priests of ages dead,  
Who slumbering in their stupendous fane  
Deep in yon mountain's heart are roused  
again

With a faint consciousness that stirs and dies  
To breathe a note of hoary litanies,  
Erewhile they chaunted while impassive  
Death

Quenched ever some poor heart's weak flame  
of faith."

A tone it seemed bereft of life, unblest,  
Emptied of thought and joy, vaguely oppress  
A moment with the living voice of prayer  
They have proved wasted on the lifeless air.  
Embers of old hope wake to feel the doom  
Of smothered souls in everlasting gloom.

Then changed the scene—for it was dark  
around:

Methought I lay in silence drear profound  
On some hot sand; the close incumbent air  
Reeked faint as from some dismal creature's  
lair,

Some presence nigh of bird or beast obscene,  
Hyena, bat, that loves to lurk unseen.  
And yet a dubious glimmer near me lay  
Upon the sand, and slow the space to grey  
Opened about me till I dim defined  
Columnar masses pale gigantic-lined  
Rude huge and lofty, with no capital  
Or fretted moulding wrought fantastical,  
Titanic blocks each horizontal laid  
From pier to pier bridging abysmal shade.

<sup>1</sup> See Herodotus, Euterpe ii. 129.

And lo! I saw each giant pillar bulged  
With form stupendous as of man, divulged  
Standing each speechless vast along the stone,  
Each to the full height of his pillar grown—  
A colonnade of these on either hand  
My twilit nave; afar they vague expand,  
To my rapt vision dwindling infinite,  
Phantoms assembling in the halls of Night!  
And then I noted nigh a crevice small;  
Through this I deemed that Day into the  
Hall

Passed half in awe to melt the shroud of  
gloom

That broods o'er these in their eternal tomb.  
These then in pauses of the living prayer  
Wailed that antistrophe of Death's despair!  
And still night jealous claims them for her  
own,

Nor may her shadow free from them be  
thrown,

But silent like black water it abides  
For ever resting down their mighty sides.

Their mummied forms are like their faces  
pale,

Each in vast crossing hands the crook and  
flail

Of an Osirian on his bosom broad  
Holds folded close, each mitred like the god.

Their presence weighs upon the mortal  
sense,

Informs with fear the solitude intense,  
Voiceless and moveless pale forever there,  
In some unguessed unhuman-wise aware.

But calm serene is every countenance,  
Unvexed more of any human chance,  
Sublime unearthly in its restfulness,  
Quiet in Destiny the passionless.

Fond fool! to dream that hopes or joys or  
woes

Of ours may ruffle this immense repose!

Can ever these have been of mortal race,  
Crushing for pelf or fame with eager face,  
Throbbing for pleasure, flushed elate with  
gain,

Sullen or blank with loss and lit again?

Yea, these were mortal, even as thyself,  
And thou shalt be as they, O wildered elf

Blown tossed like sere leaves, little comforted,  
Thou shalt be tranquil calm as are the dead !  
Even thy vain bubble-turmoil in the flood  
Viewed from the still height very grand and  
good !

Kindred with twilight now my vision grows,  
And straight between each pillared phantom  
shows

Sunk in the darkness a sarcophagus,  
Heart of the darkness, solid, ponderous ;  
The massy lid of each prodigious shoved  
Awry as though the dread inmate had moved.  
Then I knew these were Pharaohs of the Sun,  
Ramses-Sesostris, Amunoph-Memnon,  
Sesortasen, and many a power beside,  
Priest-kings imperial, who strode in pride  
Over dwarfed continents astonished pale  
Making the hearts of all the nations fail—  
Then every breath bore rumours of their fame:  
What are they now ? the shadow of a name !

Longing to pierce the incrustation dense  
Of forty centuries that hides from sense  
All rich humanity of these past lives,  
Vague embryonic there in me revives  
A story from the blithe Ionian  
Of one whose time the teller's time foreran  
By generations more innumerable  
Than lie 'tween Story's hoary sire and us.  
So while thereon I muse and peer intent  
Distincter gathers every lineament  
Out of the twilight, till I seem to hear  
Some eerie movement nigh yon shapes of fear  
By one of shadowy sarcophagi,  
Portentous ranged on either hand that die  
From sight afar, dim dwindling infinite :  
And then some shadowy form of stately height  
And gait emerges to my questioning eyes  
From where the night impenetrable lies—  
Slow moving as with contemplation fraught,  
The kingly head bowed lowly as in thought,  
Until it nears me in rapt wonder laid  
Upon the sand astonished, not afraid.  
Softly it comes companioned of a shade  
Thin traced upon the wan sandslope afar,  
Pausing so nigh that all its features are  
Evident to me, every shapely limb  
And all its vesture with the gloaming dim.

It wears aspect of one in manhood's prime  
Complexioned in no tender northern clime ;  
From all breathes moral intellectual power,  
From the grand head's expansive lofty dower,  
Howe'er curtailed of close-curved raven hair  
Ranging to neck and cheek as natives wear ;  
Breathes from his dark and musing eyes that  
live

Once more and from the full mouth sensitive.  
Of finest linen are his raiments woven,  
With long straight folds the subtle fabric cloven,  
Both long loose robe and apron girdled close  
Of girdle, whose fronting flap is wrought in  
rows

Of golden asps and lions' heads ; the neck  
Bare shapely many a jewel doth bedeck—  
Each slim wrist braceleted, his slender feet  
Have gold-laced palm-leafed sandals for them  
meet.

Can then the searching of my thought intent  
In that sad mound of human ashes blent,  
Mere chaos and oblivion, restore  
This Mycerinus as he lived of yore ?  
But hark ! a murmur low and musical,  
A voice upon my sense appears to fall.

Eternal river ! soul of all the land,  
Blue from the blue of heaven where I stand,  
I wander through the palms that fringe thy  
shore

And thee lifegiving bountiful adore !

Thy waters plash

And through the gardens wash

Making a laugh of flowers as they flash.

'Tween intersecting runnels in rich spots  
Rise tender riceblades, vividest green plots,  
Or purple lupins or the tendrilled pea,  
Or misty flax-beds thrilling airily,

With strained shadoof

Yon stooping hind aloof

Fills from the Nile his conduit constantly.

O sweetest shade of yon mimosa groves  
Where soft-hued turtles ever coo their loves !  
With mild flame-crest the gentle-toned hoopoe  
Flits through shy sunlights into open blue,

If air unweaves

Loose clouds of dainty leaves,

Mantles mild sunniness the foliage through.

And all is fair, for thou art with me, child,  
Sole budding of my house, dear undefiled,  
My love, my hope, blithe like the merry bird,  
Shrinking with shadowing of a chilly word !  
    The meanest thing  
    The old, the sorrowing,  
In thy fresh facelight with rejoicing stirred.

And I grow young again breathing the air  
Of early morning ; all the prince's care,  
Most anxious quest for ever-eluding truth,  
For woes of this great people all my ruth,  
    Melts all from me,  
    A child I gambol free  
By the fresh bubbling springs of life with thee !

Dance on, my maiden, trip it on before,  
Babbling strange tales to ne'er an auditor ;  
Singing by snatches, for a flower bending,  
Blessing lone nooks of woodland in thy wending !  
    Through shade and sun  
    Cease, little one, to run,  
Now to the carven barge we will be tending.

And there upon the river's broad expanse  
We'll watch the myriad-curling ripple glance,  
On yon sandbank grey dotterel soft sip  
The bright-brown fringe, or crested plover dip  
    With curtesy quick  
    At every calling click  
Plumed black and white he utters in his trip.

'Tis noon, relentless rules the blaze  
Of our Sun-god that ne'er a breeze allays.  
Far far away the windless river burning  
Through wan sand-levels dimly banked  
Of distant yellow hills, but nearer flanked  
With palm-girt loam-built, thorps at every  
    turning,  
And oft a huge stone temple spread  
With obelisk and sphinx and banner red ;  
Silent from heat our swarthy sailors towing  
The boat becalmed with rope on land ;  
Anon some baked wave-minèd mass at hand  
From yon loam-ridge is loosened in their  
    going,  
Falling with sudden splash and thud,  
Nor mars my soul's luxurious mood  
Enhanced of distant water-wheels' long  
    droning,

For dreamy listlessness akin  
To hazy light the lulled world swooneth in.  
I know the hind in midst of that intoning  
Sits in the centre of the wheel  
While hemp-slung jars tilt ever and refill,  
A yoke of patient circling oxen guiding,  
Roofed from the scorching glare  
By large leaves of the melons trellised there.  
On yon low sandflat motionless abiding,  
Behold a crocodile, and nigh  
Upon the neighbour bank one may espy  
Some ibis white with pink flamingoes resting ;  
But when day waneth we shall hear  
Clangour of wild geese in the crystal clear,  
Their living chain wedgewise the glory  
    breasting.

Westers the great god, now I move  
Brooding alone to yon palm-grove.  
'Tis evening hour when the palm  
Looks loveliest in skiey calm.  
It seems to mount unwavering  
Awhile for all delights that cling,  
Till last yields all the high resolve  
In graceful languor to dissolve,  
Wanton with crimsoned plume in air,  
Dally with moonlight soft and fair.

The Sun sinks—many a soul with him  
Now must explore the regions dim.  
The flood like molten metal glows,  
Taking the tarnish soon that grows  
On metal from the furnace poured,  
With richest greens and purples floored  
Beside, a brief but gorgeous hour—  
Now wakes a breeze with welcome power  
To speed the ship ; they set the sail,  
While I from far well-pleasèd hail  
The terabók and measured chaunt  
Of oarsmen sweetly wont to haunt  
Old Nile at evening, while the crew  
Indolent near their fire strew  
The deck : one stirs the lentil meal  
Over the flame ; our ship doth steal  
Still as a spirit up the glow  
Of dusking gold, her form below  
And moonlight sail i' the water's hush  
Fainter repeated, and the flush  
Of her deck-fire with a blush.

They anchor now for night upon the strand.  
 Beneath a palm upon the visions grand  
 That occupy my soul I sit and brood,  
 Scheming to compass all my people's good.  
 From yon lone waste some dismal jackal bays,  
 Far dogs bark in the village as there strays  
 A wight belated ; now while starbeams fleck  
 The tender grey of water, on my deck  
 Slumber my sailors : light of heart are they,  
 Laughing and singing blithely all the day,  
 In their scant raiment sleeping free from care—  
 But these are happy—yea, this people are  
 Light-hearted all—great Heaven ! that is well:  
 Not bitterest agelong tyranny may quell  
 These buoyant natures incompressible.

Yet, O! my people toiling more than beasts  
 While your proud lords loll scornful at their  
 feasts,  
 'Neath your tanned hide there beats a human  
 heart,  
 Your bleeding feet with writhing lashes smart,  
 Your backs are mangled, but your spirits bleed  
 More sorely yet, for at your bitter need  
 A jeer, a curse, a contumelious lip  
 Excoriates more cruel than the whip !

I in disguise late roamed amid the clangs  
 From chisel and mallet of the slaving gangs  
 Among some toilers tottering 'neath the  
 weight  
 Of rubble borne from where they excavate,  
 Whose dusk maimed limbs the rubble doth  
 encrust,  
 Their overseer as they bear the dust  
 Clapping his hands to regulate the time  
 Of their monotonous mechanic chime.  
 I heard a youth approaching timid say,  
 " Let yon frail girl fall out, my lord, I pray !  
 Put upon me her share of work to-day,  
 She is so faint, sun beats upon her head !"  
 (His love she was for whom he dared to plead)  
 But the man spurned him with a brutal wit,  
 And soon the girl fell foaming in a fit.  
 Harnessed by thousands to the wooden sledge,  
 Those huge blocks quarried with the swollen  
 wedge

These sweating human beasts of burden bore  
 Along the causeway from the river shore.  
 Scarce one is left to sow the fallow field,  
 Strong dykes neglected to the waters yield,  
 From frugal serfs the hoarded store is reft,  
 And starved men's corpses to the vultures left ;  
 While to defraud the poor our priests combine  
 To load God's scales of justice, the Divine,  
 And sway them as the golden bribes incline !  
 Yet 'tis a noble pile that doth arise  
 Soon like my sire's to climb and flout the  
 skies,  
 Scale with its flashing mount of lucid grey  
 Of Syenite fair radiant as Day  
 Yon very sanctuary of the Sun,  
 Who must wax pale when Pharaoh's work is  
 done !  
 Foodful gold fields of Memphis withering  
 prone  
 In leaguelong menace of their shadowy frown.

Alas ! my people, on crushed human breasts  
 Yon haughty mount of stone triumphant  
 rests,  
 It was set up in hearts of your firstborn,  
 Of wives and daughters outraged and forlorn,  
 Kneaded with blood of men the lime adheres,  
 The iron that wrought was tempered in your  
 tears !  
 And will the Avenger slumber evermore  
 For all the bitter crying of the poor ?  
 How long may savour of men's evil deeds  
 Stink in the nostrils till Ra-Amun heeds ?  
 Be patient, mortal ! for He bides his time ;  
 The world's deep curse and memory of their  
 crime  
 Huge stones about the necks of these shall lie  
 Dragging them low to agelong infamy !  
 Ah ! were I king—not for the weary state—  
 But I would snatch my people from such a  
 fate,  
 Pour balm into their wounds and save my land  
 From the nigh blaze of Heaven's avenging  
 brand,  
 Ere plague and famine decimate them quite  
 And in limp hands lingers no more the might  
 To ward from glazing eyes the loathly foreign  
 kite !

By day and night the burning longing grows  
In me that God will to my soul disclose  
No momentary easing of the pain,  
Some drug with virtue to consume the bane !

II

Then my dream changed—on Mencheres  
the asp  
In gold a king doth on his forehead clasp  
Bespoke him monarch now : slowly he walked  
And with some graceful noble stripling talked ;  
Bymellowing grain lithe waved and simmering  
In the blue morn lay their sweet communing.  
Earnest intent the stripling's mobile face  
With hearkening, save when a sudden race  
Some jerboa commenced with nimble leap  
Nigh to their startling feet, or at the sweep  
Of shadowing pinions from a falcon nigh ;  
Then wandered the chace-lover's eager eye  
And thought awhile—then oft King Mencheres  
Would pause and shift allusion upon these,  
Instinct with heedful sympathy and keen  
For all men doting christen great and mean.

Measures accomplished or projected still  
For weal of craftsmen, weal of men who till,  
For stimulating niggardly dull soil  
To liberal crown a less laborious toil,  
Arrest a partial handling of the laws  
And pluck their prey from ravenous red claws,  
Such themes their converse visits as they  
wend,  
Higher illuminating in the end,  
Startling the silent heart of mysteries  
Where vulgar footfall ne'er profanely pries.  
"Too subtle abstruse unhuman such a creed  
To serve the people in their hourly need ;  
To thee I open, dearest neophyte,  
That thou and other few may bear the light  
Enkindled here to many a darkling spirit,  
How from the sacred lore we all inherit  
I culled a germ, that lay as grain may lie  
Shut from all use in sepulchres flung by,  
Save it and plant and water it alone  
Till sprout soft green wings from the jasper  
stone

And wonder ! for it springs to juiceful food,  
Leaguelong gold seas of life for mortal good.  
Yea, the old symbol of Osiris I  
Took to fecundate and revivify ;  
Image of man's ideal life I wrought  
For worship as with Deity full-fraught,  
Breaking no other gods, yet setting mine  
Supreme in every heart and every shrine.  
But lo ! we near sweet places cool and dim  
Among the acacias ; chaunt, fair youth, the  
hymn  
You know of yours, rest here upon the mint  
In flower, while I the marjoram will dint."

Holy yon living Stream  
Ever twinborn all-luminous with beam  
Of orient Day arising flush  
With everlasting youth, lotus and rush  
Waking from womb of parent Nile  
Crimson beneath the Sun's engendering smile.  
Hither let mortal bring  
The votive offering !

Engendering the land  
By quickening the river's loamy sand,  
Whose eldest-born Leviathan  
All reptiles follow and the lizard clan ;  
Emblemed in hawk of fervid eyes  
And fire suppressed that in the plumage lies,  
Lordly dominion, stately wings that sweep  
As native to it all the sunny steep.  
Hither let mortal bring  
The votive offering !

Offspring himself of Light  
That puts all chaos of the soul to flight.  
Life culminates in human flower,  
Her fair world-stem maturing into power  
Of man's all-glassing consciousness,  
Yielding to each a form and comeliness.  
Hither let mortal bring  
The votive offering !

Yea, with one flame Divine  
High and mean things evolved in order shine,  
Pain, wrong, but embryos of good,  
Even our dwarf Virtue sapling of a wood  
To crown with fruits of unforeboded grace  
Worlds of intelligence of kinglier race.  
Hither let mortal bring  
The votive offering !

## III

Some interval of years appeared to pass,  
And then my vision showed as in a glass  
Mencheres little aged, but sad and changed,  
As slowly now and moodily he ranged  
With echoing foot the shadowed peristyle  
Of that vast inner court within the pile  
Of his great palace, every massy column  
Carved to a giant god of aspect solemn.  
An aged priest stern grave and dignified  
Worldwise of aspect pacing him beside.

"My hope is out—it is decreed in Heaven,  
I said, that I shall train this child to leaven  
The people with my doctrine when I go,  
For she had felt the godlike thirst to know,  
And knowing with her woman's heart and  
tact

She might have vivified my dream to fact:  
In all men's soul the worship would have  
stirred

And germinated; now your evil herd  
Of priesthood scenting peril roots it out  
With snout obscene, or in the arid drought  
Of dead parched superstition-ridden mind  
No soil congenial the seed can find.  
Now she is gone, my darling! stricken down,  
And since that hour I loathe my barren crown.  
For what am I to struggle on with God  
Since He withstands me in the way I trod?  
I thought to serve Him who will not be  
served;

All my life's bleeding travail but deserved  
An early death—so spake the oracle.  
Though Egypt from my father's cruel rule  
Yet halts and bleeds, lies faint upon her face,  
Who am I with my yearning to embrace  
My stricken brethren and to make them strong  
With strength that doth to sons of God  
belong?

Have not the gods themselves decreed the  
dole,

Yea, degradation of the flesh and soul;  
Yea, wantonness of great men in their wrong  
And slaves to writhe as writhes the viper  
thong?"

Then spake the priestly noble old  
Shammâr:

"Vain, vain, my liege, with Deity you war!  
Do men know good from evil? only youth  
May dream possession of sufficing truth.  
The mushroom dreaded as a baneful food  
Proves oft a wholesome nutriment and good;  
We snatch by night some healing medicine,  
And lo! 'tis poison that we pour so keen  
For yon beloved sleeper ailing there,  
Or 'tis a potion fraught with virtues rare  
Mayhap for one, yet worse than impotent  
In such disease for such a temperament.  
And shall the Maker not be sovereign?  
Though men be crippled in their souls and  
slain,

Few daring to affirm the bitter woe  
Wrought for their welfare whom it ground so  
low,

Whose weal soe'er may sprout and germinate  
From the hot blood and tears of such a fate—  
So is it—would thy plummet dangle still,  
Or wilt thou chain the inexorable Will?  
Sooth spake the oracle, the gods decree  
These groans of Egypt and her infamy!

"Nay what are good and evil? With a man  
Did God take counsel when He framed His  
plan

That we pronounce it frustrate overthrown  
When in her march calm Nature spurns our  
own?

Even as an elder things at random piled  
By hindering helping of a little child.  
Who frustrates His design? Some living  
men

Are miserable slaves—what spirit then  
Lived in the tyrant dancing on the slave?  
Nay, some are born to sorrow or to rave,  
Some to be wise or happy till the grave,  
And what beyond? The secret cold He  
locks

And all our turbulent guessing quiet mocks.  
Ours but to bow and to accept the lore  
In holy roll and in traditions hoar.

Thothmes beguiled thee, whose were glosses  
vain

On simple phrase and insolent disdain

Of other reverend teachers, in the guise  
Of holy truth insinuating lies,  
Inventions of his own presumptuous wit:  
Now in Amenti hath he answered it!"

"Bootless on such a theme discourse hath  
grown,"  
Replied the King, "it profits full to own . . .  
. . . Me hath God used, now leaves me in  
the hollow;  
Vain where He goes mine eyes may strain to  
follow!

"The truth that I proclaimed was too  
sublime,  
Too pure, refined for dwellers in the slime.  
I deemed that they would clutch the saving  
rope  
I lowered within the chasm where they grope.  
Too feeble alas! dazed and distraught they  
play  
With this their only hope of life and day!  
Not worshipping my Truth, but with her dress  
Investing their old idols' nakedness.  
Not less than erst their misery I feel,  
But more a myriadfold than when to heal  
I fondly hoped; ah! vainly shall you fling  
To glut the bottomless pit of suffering  
Treasures untold of life and heart and mind,  
A myriad sage lovers of their kind!—  
Traitors administering make void my dream  
Even to mere earthly uses of my scheme—

"Yet 'twas no Wizard's water that of eld  
These eyes farseeing with rapt gaze beheld  
Over the weary sand, far far away  
Where earth's hot waste dies into Heaven's  
grey—  
No mocking mirage as I dare to trust,  
But a true lake where mortal pilgrims must  
One day repose—but ever 'tis removed  
As we approach, the longed-for haven proved  
How distant still; no nearer now we seem  
Than when we started in the morning beam  
Brimful of faith that we must needs attain  
The goal ere yet life's day be on the wane!  
But now 'tis waning, still there looms around  
The old parched waste, the solitude profound,

Our weary caravan yet toiling through  
Intolerable sand and blinding blue,  
While ever and anon beside the track  
Some vulture shadows with a blot of black  
The pallid wilderness, revealing why  
So fleshless yon bleached human members lie.  
My sun will soon be low, and every time  
He issues fresh from gates of night sublime.  
He notes one more hath fallen to the rear,  
A still white shape forgetting hope and fear!  
But I, with eyes for ever steadfastly  
Set on the far goal counting it so nigh,  
Chafed at the haltings of our caravan  
By springs that bubble, under palms that fan;  
For such there are, oases in the waste;  
Chided my fellows who would lingering taste:  
'These are impure, ye should be pressing on!'  
But lo! we are not near and sinks the sun!  
My night is near, I cannot even see  
That lake which in the morning shone for me;  
Weary and disappointed I have missed  
Soft bubbling water and soft airs that kissed;  
Under cool shade of palm and tamarind  
They found their blessing—mine I cannot  
find!

"Yet subtle in me were inlets of all pleasure,  
Subtler than wont, but never mine the leisure  
For toying in my youth; yet latterly,  
Grown doubtful more and more if ever I  
May share that triumph of posterity,  
And more and more oppressed with smother-  
ing sense  
Of my fool's prudence, baffling impotence,  
Often I muse if wisdom bid me scout  
The gods' rich gifts till they be wearied  
out!  
Who dowered me with all capacity,  
And with free hand rained largesse from on  
high,  
While I trod sullen upon all their wealth,  
Deaf to my strong-beseeching youth and  
health,  
Torturing brain with unavailing thought,  
Wringing my heart with alien pangs for  
nought,  
Aloof from sympathy, that spirit's gold,  
Baffled, alone, and prematurely old. . . ."

Cold Shammâr stern rejoinder made nor spared :

"Therefore the gods (the oracle declared)  
Even because thou hast, a mortal, dared  
To cherish lawless visions for thy kind,  
To flout the pleasant toys wherewith they blind  
Creatures to heaven-appointed misery,  
Challenging their inscrutable decree,  
Lifting a rash rebellious look on high  
To their inviolable serenity ;  
For this their lightning smites thee from above !

Or shall a man lay claim to more of love,  
Justice more equal than the fateful gods?  
For this they visit with avenging rods !"

Then broke indignant answer like a flood :  
"What irks to them man's evil or his good  
If but their altars want no savoury food  
Of innocent human or dumb victims' breath?  
For all these are insatiate of death.  
Insatiate of suffering like their priests  
Quaffing men's tears for wine at all their feasts !

Therefore of gods I cry that there be none,  
We startle at our proper shadows thrown ;  
For we are in the hand of sightless Fate  
That moulds with nought of consciousness  
our state !"

#### SHAMMÂR

"Rash king ! my pupil whom I trained in youth,

Striving to leaven with venerable truth,  
Truth no invention of my feeble wit,  
But such as Heaven through us delivers it !  
Rejoicing once I saw thee fired with zeal  
Cruel confusions of the realm to heal  
By strenuous vindication of the true  
Faith sorely hurt by Chefren and Chufu.  
Ah ! still the temples moulder and the shrine  
Lies desolate, and still the people pine—  
For all the treasure thou, king-priest profane,  
Hast dared from consecrated use distrain,  
While thou dost own thy fond presumptuous  
creed

Like a weak staff hath broken in thy need !

A king, a priest—nay, frown not, I will speak  
Even if thou swift vengeance on me wreak—  
A king and priest, from thee the sacrilege !  
Thou to destroy thine order's privilege !

AMBITION tempts thy proper caste to lower :  
When didst thou brook a rivalry in power?—  
Even for high-flown schemes benevolent,  
How to the land may happiness be lent  
When thou hast dealt us priests thine impious  
blow,

Sole Heaven-elected channels of its flow?  
Yet I and all our order cordial  
In with your aims beneficent will fall  
If but from now you promise to redress  
Wrongs of the faithful and their dire distress.  
Come ! make your peace with Heaven's  
incensed powers !

So when they see your rebel spirit cowers,  
Who knows ? the oracle may even reverse  
The doom decreed and your untimely curse."

"Enough," the King replied ; "you have  
not hid

Your counsel from me and I have not chid.  
But, friend, there is almighty Destiny  
Over thine oracle, the gods, and me !  
Strong are thy gods—no more I will molest ;  
Mine now be pleasure, silken ease and rest !"

"Yea better," spake the priest, "supine  
to lie

Than your late haughty front's hostility.  
I count the slave of sense but as a beast,  
Yet venial his error if at least  
With zeal he guards our mysteries Divine  
From prying question, kneeling at the shrine  
Of his forefathers, vassal of the gods,  
Even though he rule his proper slave with  
rods."

Bitterly smiled the younger man, but here  
Some chamberlain obsequious drew near :  
Who bowing low announced a peasant sought  
His cause before the monarch might be  
brought

This very day—"How else may justice come  
Between the tax-collector of our nome

And my poor self?' Your majesty's command  
That never any barrier should stand  
To bar a prayer like this from your august——"  
"Nay, you are right," he answered; "yet I  
must  
To-day refuse it; tell him that we hunt;  
Lady Nitocrè with me in the punt  
Among the flags upon our royal pool  
Hunts the wildfowl."

"But is the man a fool,"

Shammâr broke forth, "appealing to the  
King?

Vex royal leisure for so mean a thing!  
Is this the seemly usage now at court?  
Bid him to our conclave anon resort."

But little relished Mencheres the tone  
Nor look that flitted faintly and was gone.  
"Stay," quietly he spoke with ire repressed,  
"We do recall decision we expressed:  
Tell him to wait us at the outer gate  
Toward the sundown: there in royal state  
We shall attend as erst: if any need  
Justice among our people, let him plead!"

Then even Shammâr quailed before his look,  
Yet with a grieved wise air the head he  
shook:

"You make yourself too common: men  
despise

A king who dangles ever in their eyes."

"Lord Shammâr," stern rejoined the sove-  
reign,

"Enough: do *you* remember that we reign!  
I leave your gods and all your craft to you,  
But by Ra-Amun sorely shall ye rue  
Setting at nought my sovereign decree  
Shielding the poor from your rapacity!"

Later Nitocrè, wife to Amasis  
The minister, with many a wile and kiss  
Strove to dissuade from his resolve her lover,  
With her ripe gorgeous beauty hanging over  
Him fired with her abundant mellow breast  
And supple shapely shoulder bare of vest;  
Yet nor large eyes that languished, nor superb  
Head of night-locks with lissome snaky curb

(A coil fire-eyed of seagreen emerald),  
Nor splendid arms that winding soft en-  
thrall'd,

Prevailed upon him to relinquish base  
The kingly task which called him to his place  
That day at least—a place how nobly filled  
Before alas! the nobler man was killed  
In him the dreamer, little apt for strife  
In slow undazzling processes of life,  
Impatient with a march circuitous  
Of turning face from where the ideal glows.

IV

He banquets in the alabaster hall  
Echoing slaves' obsequious footfall,  
On ivory throne contorted limbs support,  
From Syria pale, from Ethiopia swart;  
He quaffs from jewelled beaker fair of shape  
Sweet purple foam of Mareotic grape,  
Feasting on viands rare, viol and lyre,  
Pipe dance and song, feeding the sense with  
fire.

Yet soon he wearies of the rich repast  
(Fools' vapid laughter palls upon the taste),  
Where crowned with lotus many a courtier  
sits,

Who lives by letting out some flyblown wits,  
Buffoon they pay for sport with dainty bits;  
Who for some shining baubles they may dole  
To feline malice prostitutes a soul,  
To spiteful drivell and beslaving,  
Incense men deem most grateful to a king;  
Whose grovelling they suffer, yet disdain  
More than pet monkeys with a ribbon chain.

Therefore he leaves the empty revel now,  
Fillet of violet about the brow:  
More dainty and effeminate his mien,  
Still fair with lingering youth behold him lean  
Upon some comrade of repulsive brow,  
Of visage lewd, coarse-built and rude and low.

"Yet lingers one sweet drop within the cup  
Of life: shall senseless deserts drink it up  
Even as the rest? some youth remains to  
bless,  
Some relish of the sense, and comeliness.

Long-prisoned joy may hesitate to fly,  
 Yet craves brief wanton in the summer-sky  
 Ere night be fallen—therefore softly pushes  
 My light papyrus boat among the rushes,  
 I flinging true the whirring wooden arm  
 Mid wheeling wildfowl rising in alarm.  
 Some blessed sense of living glows diffused  
 Through muscles, nerves and organs long  
 disused.

Now first I learn, a fullgrown man at school  
 Among young boys who well may count me  
 fool,

Now first I learn exulting to inhale  
 Deep draughts of healthful airs that never fail  
 Lavish to flood the sunny infinite,  
 Now first my dulled sense revels in the light,  
 Riding and curbing the incarnate wind  
 My fleetfoot steed, with quivering spear to  
 find

And beard and charge the tuskèd bristling  
 boar

Roused from his moist lair by the reedy shore,  
 Buffeting breasting royal-rolling Nile,  
 Jubilant, scornful of the crocodile !

“Relish is ever keener from restraint ;  
 And since the glow of passion smoulders faint  
 No more within my heart, but finds free vent,  
 The illuminating blaze will ne’er be pent  
 In one poor spot like any common fire ;  
 Since mirrors of a vast and fierce desire  
 Prove cold clear marbles of the intellect,  
 While thought’s chaste halls—how cool till  
 now !—reflect

Fuel and fan one terrible red flame.  
 And yet shall Reason bearded fail to tame  
 Or govern rebel Passion’s lawlessness ?  
 Inured to reigning shall she fail no less  
 Than one long shut from all her right Divine ?  
 But if she govern, then I do but twine  
 Festoons of blossom round some massive piers  
 Of one grand palace all the spirit rears.  
 Still, dove-eyed queen, sweet Sympathy may  
 here

Drop the gem priceless of her sacred tear,  
 Still Love retain her own most holy fear  
 Of hurting any whatsoe’er the greed,  
 Still upon alien benefit sweet feed ;

Which lovely gods who cherishes at home  
 Doth never wrong how far soe’er he roam,  
 And though he learn by sharp experience  
 The All is more than our circumference.”

“For subtleties I lack the competence :  
 I blush not bluntly praising life of sense !”  
 Rejoined the other, “what inspiring wine !  
 Fervid the Sun—thy languid steps incline  
 Toward yon labyrinth of trellised vine !”  
 There many a green nook tenderly he woo’d  
 And won to wait upon the softer mood,  
 Shaping themselves to bowers of delight,  
 Entwined with odorous roses pink and white.  
 There as they lie with all their being sweet  
 Unstrung, aware how in the lucid heat  
 Silken-winged elves with aimless fleeting’  
 float,

Aware that from the oar of the light boat  
 Some drops have laden with a gemmy freight  
 Yon oily lily leaves that scintillate  
 Level on the water, on them listless lying  
 Steals music, blooming to fruition, dying—  
 And lo ! yon spaces, where the vine-leaves  
 fringed

Caught mild green fire and tenderly impinged  
 Upon the blue laving in azure light,  
 Fill silently with forms of suavest white—  
 Although no kid may wander there to bite.

Lo ! they emerge but coyly from the screen,  
 One by one gleaming on the sylvan scene.  
 Beautiful maids and youths the vines enclose  
 Hued like some petal of the faint blush-rose ;  
 While amber lights luxuriously lie  
 O’er undulations of warm ivory,  
 Stealing at leisure into every charm ;  
 And now they dance full many a rounded arm,  
 With slender flexile hand aurora-tipped,  
 On lovesick air waves like long flowers dipped  
 In a Spring zephyr’s gentle fantasy ;  
 Their rich white flesh dimpling deliciously,  
 Or smoothing to a stainless milk-expanse,  
 As bend voluptuous motions of the dance.  
 Some toss the timbrel or the castanet,  
 Wooing young limbs to lovelier flowing yet.  
 Waxing and waning of each tender limb,  
 Shoulder and bosom, waist and ankle slim,

Rarest of shading noteth unto sense,  
Noteth faint heave and tender subsidence ;  
About their necks cascades of golden flow,  
Their dewy eyes melt languid as they go :  
And some are clothed with linen fabric fine,  
Leaving the fancy little to divine,  
Yet so enhancing all the charms that shine  
Through as it clings into the silken skin,  
Or falling free with mistlike lingering  
From some bowed body, faint and saturate  
With warmth and sweetness of its happier  
state.

Lo ! when dusk evening falls these fair green  
alleys

Hung with soft lamps ring through with  
mirthful sallies,  
And furious hot nameless orgies haste  
That he impressing days with nights may taste,  
Despite the gods, in overflowing measure  
(Doubling their poor six years) long stinted  
pleasure ;

For after this the mummy at the feast  
Reminds, man ceaseth even as the beast.

v

Then all was silent : in a chamber next  
I saw the monarch, and no longer vexed  
Angry and miserable seemed his mien ;  
Upon that youth now grown to man did lean  
The king, pale, near the dying, yet serene.

"Now help me to the embrasure—leave  
me so—

Nay, lights I need not, let the afterglow  
Glimmer upon the sacred bull of gold  
That doth the body of my darling hold.  
So lies she as a blest Osirian.  
In Him divine ideal only can  
Live here or yonder a poor child of man.  
How often through the long nights have I  
stayed

Beside her mourning, pondering, and prayed !  
With censers breathing odorous incense,  
Cinnamon, cassia, myrrh, frankincense,  
Winged talisman of Thummim on my breast  
Alive with jewels' firehearted unrest,  
Sardonyx, emerald and chrysoprase,  
And carbuncle that feeds the night with rays—

How often from this window watched the stars,  
Seeking what sinister conjunction mars  
My destiny ; with cabalistic sign,  
Pentacle, muttered charm, and vapours fine  
From mystic tripod, nightly summoned nigh  
Spirits to open out the mystery !  
But I possessed a wondrous healing gift ;  
This, and half-earnest wonders wrought, uplift  
With veritable knowledge me to heights  
Of awe and worship ; from the proud delights  
Of such thou knowest how oft I loathing turned  
To where my youth's pure aspiration burned  
Mourning above that altar overturned !

"Now am I free to seek thee, love, at last !  
Expand like yon burnt gums into the vast,  
To seek thee, and thy mother whom I loved,  
From whom my soul's affection never roved.  
When by this life and others I shall learn  
Wisdom, a kinglier man I may return  
To earth—I know not—but 'tis something,  
friend,

To look life in the face before the end,  
Praying our silent, our mysterious guide  
To tell his name, though never he replied  
To one ; yet so at least we are not led  
Mere soulless things, clothed and amused  
and fed.

And though some scheme we fondly fostered  
fail,

Though ramparts of the evil we assail  
Be deaf to summons of our trumpet blast,  
Yea, though we stiff and mangled at the last  
Lie by the scarce-breached wall, 'tis not in  
vain ;

No bold, no high intentions but sustain  
The sacred cause, the spirit of the host  
Whose cause is God's, and never can be lost !  
Shall we, mere infants, petulant conclude  
That our wise Father leads not home to good  
If He desert the path we count direct,  
We with true heart but fumbling intellect ?

"All creatures serve, for all must serve,  
the Lord ;  
Rocks, winds, all living things fulfil his word.  
Shall we, who may with free and full consen  
Of all our being follow Ilm, content

Ourselves with yielding passive like the clod,  
Or frantic darting with the hook of God  
Sunk in our jaws, hither and thither, fools !  
Spent with erratic effort, from our pools  
Doth not the mighty Angler draw us forth,  
Despite weak complaints and mad rebellious  
froth ?

The high gods offer their alternative,  
To march erect before them as they drive  
Bland and serene their high triumphal car ;  
Or ignominious as captives are,  
Chained to their chariot-wheels, be dragged  
in dust

A hissing and a scorn ; for all we must  
Enhance the royal progress of their state,  
Or moody slaves, or conquerors elate.

“For me I knew it, acted as I knew ;  
Yet have I failed and fallen as others do !  
My nature was a swiftly-running troop  
Where if the leader but a moment droop  
Or stumble, all the blindly-rushing throng  
Trample and crush him hurrying along.  
If with me gracious Reason bore the sway  
Pertaining to her from an early day,  
Passions and fancies of all face and hue,  
Portentous multitude, were growing too,  
A glory to the spirit's court, and sent  
On many a mission wise beneficent ;  
Yet these but waited their occasion sly,  
Waited their sovereign's averted eye,  
Her wavering amid their fierce turmoil  
To pluck her from the throne and to despoil.  
Alas ! ye know the rest. I fondly thought,  
Though traitor passions overbold and haught  
Waxed in my very presence, I could tame  
Them by a word when my occasion came ;  
But when my righteous ardours in my face  
Fate flung, and mocking blew me to my place,  
At length my joints were loosened, I grew  
weak,

And let the clamorous tongues unchided speak,  
Till when at length I frowned they over-  
bore me,

And swarming round me stunned, the rebels  
tore me.

Of doing good to man my heart despaired,  
While lulled of sense less day by day I cared ;

And men wept on, but duller grew mine ears ;  
I shut me from the importunate sound of  
tears,

Muffled in roses, drowning with guitar  
Sobs that would ruffle sweet indolence and  
jar.

I failed—and may my failure prove your  
warning !

Ne'er now may dawn for me another  
morning :

Yet in my failure I am comforted  
To know that not myself the legions led,  
The legions of God's children, but while I  
Defeated with my poor division lie,  
He waves the army on to victory.

“Yea, setting steadfastly my waning face  
Toward the mysterious future of the race,  
Ere mine eyes fail for ever they descry  
Far-off arisen a kinglier Man than I,  
One with a stronger purpose and more pure,  
Who, though the world assail him, shall  
endure ;

One with a clearer vision, wider scope,  
A faith more dauntless, a diviner hope ! . . .

“Yet ah, my child, my wife, if ye had lived  
Mayhap my loftier purpose might have  
thrived.

Could one from his ideal grovelling fall  
If near him, ever beckoning recall  
By their sweet faith untroubled simple pure,  
Stood heavenly souls himself had helped  
mature

Through former years, with anxious nurturing  
On all of high and holy love may bring ?  
Nay, but I thank the Gods for taking them.  
What adamant barrier may stem  
Passion's o'erswollen infernal torrent-rush  
Whelming and desolating in the crush  
Reason, love, duty, all remorselessly ?  
Such was the fate predestinate for me,  
Doomed from a child with strange and pre-  
mature

Flame of the sense nought may avail to cure  
Or quench, though smothered ; many a  
chance-like wind

Unaware fanning smouldering embers blind—

Yea, this curst hand, thy fondling tears  
bedewed,  
In thy true heart's dear life-blood were  
imbued !  
And thou, blest child, whom envious Heavens  
claim,  
Might blush to-day naming thy father's name !

"Scarce in the dusk I see the pyramid  
That you will place my senseless shape amid—  
Less than the twain, you well observe it less—  
For till of late I yielded unto stress  
Of mere barbaric custom never, till  
My heart grew sick and weary, and my fill  
Of ease and pleasure I began to take. . . .  
Only, sweet youth, I charge thee for my sake,  
See that to lower me they only take  
The hale and strong, and many, ne'er a boy.  
Even in their very deaths our kings destroy  
Many a life more worthy than their own,  
Crushed under some huge carcase-coffer of  
stone.  
Do you who love me and have understood  
Strive as you may to fan the spark of good  
I may have kindled ; my successor waits  
Impatient, and alas ! I fear me hates  
The righteous cause. I leave it to the  
fates. . . .

"Yea, verily, the truth I uttered shall  
From their long lethargy the nations call,  
At first, like voices one who dreams may hear,  
Strange alien sense from sleep the words may  
wear,  
Yet in Heaven's hour, not mine, they shall  
put on  
No vague fool's meaning, but their very own ;  
Yea, and a fuller than myself have known ;  
Working insensibly through ages' course  
With alien agencies' calm patient force,  
Until at last dull slumbers give and break,  
And to clear vision all the peoples wake !  
By wrong and suffering and failure  
The dread World-Soul in darkness doth  
mature  
Immeasurable ends, and calm contrives,  
Tracing effacing myriad single lives ;  
The child devours absorbs the sire and thrives

More consummate—the infinite content  
Flows aye with tentative experiment.  
Behold the large moon, a sun's ghost, displayed  
O'er the new palm-girt huts and dykes I  
made—  
Over far flats, dim hills, and cereals,  
Temples and tombs, the Nile and his canals ;  
In the elf-gleam commingling strangely lie  
Great and mean, living, dead, as in the eye  
Of all-transcending still Eternity !"

These the last words King Mencheres out-  
spoke :  
Soon after I believe that I awoke.

### NOTE

THERE seems to be very good evidence that the worship of Osiris assumed the prominent position justly attributed to it by Herodotus in the reign of King Mycerinus (a Greek form of Men-che-ra). I have accordingly combined this assumption with the story about Mycerinus in Herodotus. It must strike the reflecting reader as strange why the oracle at Buto should be so stern and uncompromising with a king who is described as not only just and benevolent, but also religious. If, however, we regard him as independent thinker and religious reformer, the mystery becomes much lighter. To the remarkable analogy between this myth and the Christian History I need only here allude, lest any should cavil at that faint anticipation of Christianity which I have ascribed to the king. This, in fact, only amounts to his Osiris creed and his Egyptian half-belief in transmigration. The great Hebrew lawgiver was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians ; but of course I have not ventured to ascribe here any prevision of the future approaching in clearness to that of the inspired Hebrew prophets. I will only add that I believe the mind and character here portrayed to be on the whole distinctively Oriental. But in various ages and countries men essentially like one another have appeared, with similar aspirations, doubts, ideas, feelings, and inward conflicts, bearing also much the same relation to the world around them. And how widely separated soever in time and space, these men have borne a more striking family resemblance to one another than they have borne to those around them, to their own brothers and their own cousins. Take, e.g., such men as the writer of Ecclesiastes, Buddha, Empedocles, Giordano Bruno, Abelard, or Schelling. I doubt not there is a growth, a modification in ideas and feelings about philo-

sophy and ethics ; nevertheless between leading minds of different times there is that remarkable family likeness : the same problems, the same conflicts do wonderfully recur ; and common human vitality may easily be sacrificed to an over erudite anxiety after literal correctness of outline and drapery. I do not think, however, that I have been guilty of any glaring anachronism here. The local colour is distinctively Egyptian, and old Egypt lives as vividly on the monuments as modern Egypt does around them. Between the two the difference is but slight. But the spirit in which I have worked has certainly been one in accordance with the view here maintained—that mind and character of a certain type vary far less in widely separated times and places than it is common to assume.

I need only add, that had I seen Mr. Matthew Arnold's fine poem *Mycerinus* before writing this, I might have hesitated to compete with so formidable a rival.

### GANYMEDE

AZURE the heaven with rare a feathery cloud ;  
 Azure the sea, far-scintillating light,  
 Soft rich like velvet yielding to the eye ;  
 Horizons haunted with some dream-like sails ;  
 A temple hypæthral open to sweet air  
 Nigh on the height, columned with solid  
     flame,  
 Of flutings and acanthus-work instinct  
 With lithe green lizards and the shadows sharp  
 Slant barring golden floor and inner wall.

A locust-tree condensing all the light  
 On glossy leaves, and flaky spilling some  
 Sparkling among cool umbrage underneath ;  
 There magically sobered mellow soft  
 At unware beholding gently laid  
 A youth barelimbed the loveliest in the world,  
 Gloatingly falling on his lily side,  
 Smoothing one rounded arm and dainty hand  
 Whereon his head conscious and conquering  
 All chestnut-curved rests listless and superb ;  
 Near him and leaning on the chequered bole  
 Sits his companion gazing on him fond,  
 A goat-herd whose rough hand on bulky knee  
 Holds a rude hollow reeden pipe of Pan,  
 Tanned clad with goatskin rudely-moulded  
     huge ;

While yonder, browsing in the rosemary  
 And cytisus, you hear a bearded goat,  
 Hear a fly humming with a droning bee  
 In yon wild thyme and in the myrtles low  
 That breathe in every feebly-blowing air ;  
 Whose foamy bloom fair Ganymede anon  
 Plucks with a royal motion and an aim  
 Toward his comrade's tolerant fond face.  
 Far off cicada shrills among the pine,  
 And one may hear low tinkling where a stream  
 Yonder in planes and willows, from the beam  
 Of day coy hiding, runs with many a pool  
 Where the twain bathe how often in the cool !

And so they know not of the gradual cloud  
 That stains the zenith with a little stain,  
 Then grows expansive, nearing one would say  
 The happy earth—until at last a noise  
 As of a rushing wind invades the ear,  
 Gathering volume, and the shepherd sees,  
 Amazed forth-peering, dusking closing all  
 Startled and tremulous rock-roses nigh,  
 Portentous shadow ; and before he may  
 Rise to explore the open, like a bolt  
 From heaven a prodigy descends at hand,  
 Absorbing daylight ; some tremendous bird,  
 An eagle, yet in plumage as in form  
 And stature far transcending any bird  
 Imperial inhabiting lone clefts  
 And piny crags of this Idæan range.

But lo ! the supernatural dread thing,  
 Creating wind from cavernous vast vans,  
 Now slanting swoops toward them, hovering  
 Over the fair boy smitten dumb with awe.  
 A moment more, and how no mortal knows,  
 The bird hath seized him, if it be a bird,  
 And he though wildered hardly seems afraid,  
 So lightly lovingly those eagle talons  
 Lock the soft yielding flesh of either flank,  
 His back so tender, thigh and shoulder  
     pillowed  
 How warmly whitely in the tawny down  
 Of that imperial eagle amorous !  
 Whose beaked head with eyes of burning flame  
 Nestles along the tremulous sweet heave  
 Of his fair bosom budding with a blush,  
 So that one arm droops pensile all aglow

Over the neck immense, and hangs a hand  
Frail like a shell, pink like an apple bloom ;  
While shadowy wings expansive waving wind  
Jealously hide some beauty from the sun.

Poor hind ! he fancied as the pinions  
clanged  
In their ascent, he looking open-mouthed  
Distraught yet passive, that the boy's blue eye  
Sought him in soaring ; his own gaze be sure  
Wearied not famished feeding upon all  
The youth's dear charms for ever vanishing  
From his poor longing, hungered for in  
heaven—

Took his last fill of delicate flushed face,  
And swelling leg and rose-depending foot.  
Slim ankle, dimpling body rich and full.  
Behold ! he fades receding evermore  
From straining vision misting dim with tears,  
Gleaming aloft swanwhite into the blue  
Relieved upon the dusky ravisher,  
Deeper and deeper glutting amorous light,  
That cruel swallows him for evermore.

## ON THE RHINE

ON the little plank-pier of the village,  
The village on banks of Rhine,  
With peasants brown from the tillage  
See a travelling youth recline.

The rock with its castle facing,  
Vine-hills in a sunny air,  
The silver current chasing  
With image reversed and rare.

But the youth loses eyes of dreaming  
In the heat-haze luminous  
Afar where the flood looks streaming  
From skies mysterious.

Till a cloud or a smoke faint staining,  
A phantom emerges dim :  
Though his eye grow tired with straining,  
His heart rings a happy chime.

With the wash of the mighty water  
As it forks at the pier piles,  
And the peasants' careless laughter,  
And the myriad river-smiles.

Now you see the deck of the steamer,  
The froth of her rushing wheel ;  
She sidling smother and tamer  
Fling the uncoiling reel !

A maiden has waved him greeting  
As he hurries across the plank,  
While thirsty eyes in the meeting  
Draughts for a century drank.

To the vineyards turn their glances  
And storied castle shells,  
To the creaming foam as it dances  
In the crush of the paddle swells.

But their faces touch more nearly  
Than anything compels  
If two young travellers merely  
Study the Drachenfels.

At the last I saw them standing  
With wringing hands locked long ;  
But the careless crowd at the landing  
To separate was strong.

To bear through the years asunder  
With a change of cares and strife,  
Till they only dreamily wonder  
Where each has roved in life.

And if either came to the river  
In a far-off after year,  
And watched the sunlight quiver  
On water about the pier ;

It would seem as though two strangers  
Had met as lovers here,  
While they, mere careless rangers,  
Travelled with him and her.

For the hour has been crowned and banished  
When the youth stood there intent ;  
And the globes of the stream have vanished  
Whereon his gaze was bent.

So lost are thought and feeling  
That glimmered in boy and maid :  
To the old spot wistful stealing  
We find the past is dead !

Our friends may be laughing or weeping  
Much as they used of old,  
Nor yet our little ones leaping  
Over our loveless mould.

And one may indeed resemble  
The man who was yours before,  
And your yearning spirit a-tremble  
May feel for the friend of yore.

Learn such a longing to smother :  
Yesterday's friends are gone ;  
Your friend were not more another  
Slept he under the stone.

Still stands the pier of the village ;  
But never from there again  
That youth with men from the tillage  
Eyes to the haze shall strain.

## A LONG MOURNING

### I

THEY tell her she has wept him long,  
They bid her weep no more ;  
They point her to the shouting throng  
Who welcomed her of yore.

### II

Two years—'Tis long to weep the good,  
The heart which loved her best ;  
The great deep heart which ever glowed  
In her full answering breast.

### III

What gain to grieve ? what gain in sooth  
That face to face is pressed  
One warm, and one dead-cold, where both  
With life brimful caressed ?

### IV

And Echo breathes : What gain, what gain  
To call the silent dead—  
To call athwart the wind and rain  
That sweep their lonely bed ?

### V

Had Shylock taken that living flesh  
Close on the heart decreed,  
How vain that breast all quivering fresh  
To ask : What gain to bleed ?

### VI

We bid her idly, meaning well,  
Be glad again as we :  
Her sun is down as theirs who dwell  
Far, far, beyond the sea !

### VII

Erect she walked in all her ways  
Ere nightfall stayed her foot ;  
Scarce may she thrid the dance's maze  
Whose music all is mute.

### VIII

Or must she wear that lying smile  
Which chafes the wounded heart ?  
O ! let the stricken deer awhile  
Dwell, as she craves, apart !

### IX

A woman she—I well believe  
You wealthy ones and high  
May deem a wife most weak to grieve  
If a mere husband die.

### X

If lives the greed you loved in him,  
Though that brave heart be cold,  
Weak sterile tears may only dim  
Charms hourly growing old.

### XI

The young, the generous, the wise,  
Sleeps dark for evermore ;  
Pale shivering trees where he low lies  
Wild wind and rain sweep o'er.

## XII

Sweep you more callous o'er the mute,  
And ogling draw! "We prove  
Our faith resigned"—Your breaths pollute  
A genuine woman's love!

## XIII

She weeps with them, mean company!  
Who own a human heart.  
No more—their Father bring them nigh  
Their sleepers, ne'er to part!

## TO MY MOTHER

ON HER RECOVERY FROM A DANGEROUS  
ILLNESS

IN a half-darkened room I stood  
One autumn afternoon;  
The dying day in desolate mood  
Wept on with weary moan.  
I looked toward a shadowed bed  
Where thou in fevered sleep  
Didst labouring breathe: a nameless dread  
Made me in silence weep.  
I saw the cheerless day's decline  
And then I looked on thee:  
Thy life, the very source of mine,  
Seemed ebbing slow from me!  
Ah! childhood's pure and happy hours!  
The tales you used to tell  
I' the deep pine-wood, my hand in yours;  
And hers who died as well:  
The kneeling at your knee to pray,  
The playing in your smile;  
Sweet guidance of a later day;  
It seems a little while  
Ag we three, close linked in love,  
From all the world withdrawn,  
I' the cottage near a chestnut grove  
Watched Alpine eve and morn.  
O memories, I cannot bear  
Your wistful faces, go!  
Baffled my flagging wings of prayer  
In such a storm of woe.

Yet Love took pity: slowly sank  
The mantling tide of death  
From thy dear lips: His love I thank  
Which ever broadeneth  
Before mine eyes, though they be dim!  
Thy gentle life from now  
Filled slow once more toward the brim  
To bless where'er its flow—  
Now this thine own sweet natal day  
Once more in peace we spend:  
Be calm as this their long array;  
With birth to Heaven the end!

## A NEW LIGHT

## I

THERE is a low rude lichened wall that folds  
A humble graveyard on a lowly hill;  
Within there grows a solitary ash,  
Amid whose delicate foliage myriad throats  
Flood stainless blue with thronging notes of  
joy;  
Whence elfin forms dip swift and shimmering  
With wing's-rim spirting sunshine off in spray,  
Air-skimmed their tremulous music from the  
mouth.  
What trilling cheeping twittering in the tree!  
How do they gossip fresh from over-sea,  
With childlike breaks exuberant of glee,  
Their strange experience in alien lands  
And of the long long journey o'er the brine!  
While underneath, the speargrass lush and tall  
Upon each vivid blade lets flaky light  
Slide glinting, kindling beryl atmosphere  
In bowers below, where gamesome shadows  
play  
With mingling daisy kingcup and sweet  
clover.  
  
Here drones the bee with pollen-golden  
limb,  
Haze-blue the landscape vague expands afar.  
Where silver river shines from bosoming  
wood.  
Here, dappled o'er of tender floating shadow,  
Under the tree a boy was wont to lie

Three summers gone and commune with the  
soul,

The gentle soft-eyed spirit of the spot.  
When last he came he wept into her lap  
"Serene you'll smile, my playmate, when  
I go!"

He, frail and spiritual, communed oft  
With echoes hollow from these vanished lives  
Among their grassy mounds and tottering  
stones.

"Ah! yet," he cried, this frail wan poet-  
boy,

"I'd live my own full proper life and die,  
I'd press deep in some flower-bells of the  
world,

In to their dim soft-folded mystic heart  
Where lurk some clear rich honeydrops for  
man!

I would add somewhat to the hived store,  
O'er human hearts all silent cold to me  
I would float free my thistledowns of thought  
To germinate chance-wafted where they fall,  
And quicken those barren tracts my soul  
o'eryearns

To joy with purple-blossomed sympathy.  
Yea, I would press into the heart of things,  
Thence into human hearts, to be a power  
Therein to quicken, to soothe, to elevate,  
To thrill with joy of what I see and feel.  
Alone some little love and sympathy  
I crave from them, some warmth from fire I  
feed,

Some smiling back in rainbow hues to me,  
Some tender breath of thanks from seeds I sow!  
For if I find it not, ah! woe is me;  
Must I not deem the wing-germs of my soul  
A mere dead dust, mine embers all aglow  
With heat and light mere simulated fire!

"Clasp but my hand, great brotherhood,  
in yours,  
And hail me one, though weak, yet one of you!  
Assure my steps with calm supernal eyes  
You who have won the goal—

"None answer me!

For ye have scaled the height with yearlong  
toil

Of hand and foot, and lying proudly there  
Too much in sooth it were that I should hope  
Help from you, patient conquerors, whom few  
Helped in your progress calm indomitable!  
Sweet is the flavour of the fruit of toil,  
When we have won it may we not enjoy?  
So hearkening to the still small inner voice  
'Thou art a poet,' full of confidence  
I bend my gaze upon the Heaven-kissed  
height,

Mounting alone—until the body faint—  
I shall be higher, life will not be lost. . . .

"Ah! yet how soon life falters to the close,  
And none may hear the feeble note I sing  
Mellowing hourly to entrance the world.  
Spare me awhile, sweet death, and come  
again,

For now no token of me may remain,  
No undulation where the water gulfed,  
About my day's mild flash and faint report  
No lingering wraithlike mist among the wood,  
And no unquiet murmur in the rock!  
No muttered thunder from far realms of death  
Daring the shadowy mountains to forget  
The march of storm that smote and blinded  
them!

"Nay, why not be forgotten like the rest,  
As these are round me? unto God I yield  
Myself, my being—mother, so is best,  
And home I turn to fade upon thy breast  
Where blindly first I felt my way to life!"

Now he is dead—go seek him where he lay  
Four springs ago—there is not any change;  
Birds yet are shaking mazy song abroad;  
As then the cherry and the applebloom  
Heave silent rosed white foam athwart the  
blue,  
And sleek leaves flutter over violet pools  
In woods as then—ah! not those very birds,  
Nor bloom those very blossoms, leaves and  
flowers!

Some change I ween the very place may show;  
Yon turf freshmounded where he loved to  
lie—

Nay, but he lies there—only will not move

With dayfall homeward as he used of yore,  
But lie through moonrise and unhasting stars;  
No more *she* waits him near the cottage door  
As in that summer gone, but near the wheel  
She sits, a wintrier snow upon her head,  
And a light faded from her reverend face.  
And while he lies, all vainly mellow lights  
With shadows move "eye-music" o'er his  
breast,

A flowersoft breast of yore how sensitive !  
Vain do the birds with tireless melody  
Visit an ear more apt to thrill of yore  
Than any sporecell tipping elfin moss  
Upon some breezy hill-top—all in vain !  
He sleeps and may not waken any more.

## II

Yet look ! behold ! What splendid cavalcade

Draws nigh this lowly garden of the dead ?  
Grave men and reverend, liveried at least  
In garbs imposing, with official air,  
With pomp of gold-knobbed staff, trombone  
and drum,

Bland carrying lavish laurel coronets  
And incense shut in silver thuribles.

It seems that one, some friend who haunts the grave,  
Hath asked "What seek you?" "'Tis the poet-boy  
We seek," they answer ; "to fulfil we come  
His aspiration, clasp his hand in ours,  
Hail him as one of us, with grand calm eyes  
Look courage into his, to chaunt his praise  
And fill his nostrils with our incense, Fame !"   
The friend replies : "It is a little late,  
Methinks, for this, wise mentors of young  
thought,

Whose Solomon awards leave ne'er appeal !  
A carcase, O illustrious brotherhood,  
Claim for your fellow, clasp this clammy hand,  
Look courage in these blank lacklustre eyes,  
And titillate yon stiff dead cartilage  
With fumes of fame ! Death's ear is somewhat dull,

And look you this—this body might I fear  
Repay with scarce polite indifference

Your fashionably tardy patronage !  
Lo ! the World-Soul with birdsong, breath  
of flower,

And summer light, may waken not his child ;  
Will shawms and resin and your fetid breath  
(Though these be larger loss a myriadfold)  
Think you be more persuasive to arouse ?—  
Yet in his life I never heard him crave  
Applause from you, nor kith nor kin of yours,  
Learned censors of the way wild roses blow !  
Who when we deem you nodding in assent  
Mayhap are only nodding in your sleep—  
Ye chance to want some 'new light' I  
suppose,

May one be found not vulgarly alive,  
Coarsely in need of you, and even as ye,  
Mere grimy feeding man—no footing yield  
To such ! the dead are crowned with haloes  
vague,

And draw the graceful the luxurious tear.  
'Tis generous—and cheap—to praise the dead,  
Who press no claim—so living seer die !  
We pride us on the sepulchres we build  
For merit, torturing long-suffering stone.  
The seer, fool ! would rather men should hear  
Even if his clothes be coarse or grosser faults  
Of erring men be his, than wait the chance  
Of flattering lies above his callous dust !  
Tell, world-worn Dante ! wert not thou con-  
soled

In far Ravenna, in thy foreign grave,  
When Florence piled thee yonder incubus  
In Santa Croce for a cenotaph ?

"Yourselves have failed, shall other folk  
succeed ?

At least with thorns shall bristle all their road,  
And they shall climb, if climb they must, in  
blood !

Well, friends, we challenge your alternative ;  
For climb in face of all of you we will !

"But ye intend to keep our letters pure—  
Yea, as the worm benevolent intends  
When fretting in deep seas an oyster-shell  
To fill the wound with slow-secreted pearl !  
Nay, pearls are of the oyster, not the worm.  
What in the grand economy of God

Exceeds the generation of a child ?  
 Yet shall we praise the lecher for his lust ?  
 Nay everything hath function of his own.  
 Expect a gnat to settle, not to sting !  
 Clutch bold your nettle, scotch your venom'd  
     snake,  
 But only fools adjure them not to hurt."

They only smiled a hard superior scorn,  
 Puffed at their hautboys, clattered on their  
     drums,  
 While some began to swing the smoke abroad.  
 If yet he lived, he lived, methought, with  
     God,  
 And well methought the quiet green spot he  
     loved  
 Shrined his young body : so I held my ears  
 And turned away—these gentlemen I knew  
 Had private business of their own to do.

Poor boy ! may one indeed akin to thee,  
 Seasoned more stern for battle and for toil,  
 Raise where thou liest a cross for memory !  
 And there enshrined in Death's ice-atmos-  
     phere  
 May thy fair head enwreathed with deathless  
     flowers  
 Never decay, but grace the special peak  
 Thy delicate subtle genius hath scaled !

### AN ANGEL'S GIFT

A LITTLE boy with clustered curl  
 And soft wide eyes of ocean blue  
 Was kneeling where the misty swirl  
     Of one sunbeam came silent through  
 The shadow of a curtain'd room  
 On cradled sister newly come.

Was kneeling by the tiny bed,  
 And gazing on the tiny child  
 Asleep with hand above her head,  
 And whispered, "Down the beam so mild,  
 Baby, did the angel move  
 Folding thee with arms of love ?

"Tearful left thee with us here,  
 Lingered long the heavenward wings,  
 Poised upon the shining air,  
     Warmth of angel-folding clings  
 Still O sister babe to thee  
 Lapt in such serenity !

"Feeling yet those living thrills  
 Of the stainless angel breast,  
 Wher' thine infant spirit fills  
     With the rapture, unrepressed  
 Lo ! thy face it overflows  
 In a smile mysterious."

Came the father while the boy  
 Thoughts like these was whispering,  
 Gazed upon the common joy,  
     Felt "From far my babe must bring  
 Calm that seems profound as death,  
 Yet is of life that openeth.

"I cannot deem such peace akin  
 To any after peace of ours :  
 Yet is it only that within  
     The spirit sleeps with folded powers ?  
 A pilgrim sleeping in the vale  
 No dreams of dizzy climbs assail.

"But each new height the spirit gains  
 A fiercer storm of trouble daunts.  
 Beyond the region of the rains  
     And virgin snows the condor haunts,  
 Far o'er the currents of our air  
 Is there a sphere serene and rare ?

"We dream, we hope, we trust that those  
 Who with perplexed yet sunward face,  
 With wavering steps and tortuous,  
     Still brave the mist shall find the place.  
 Then Love's rich spices shall embalm  
 This fair void shell of baby calm.

"We know not what and whence we are,  
 Nor how this human spirit grows ;  
 But should thy steps in years afar  
     E'er turn where she and I repose,  
 The grass of our twin graves will move  
 And whisper, 'They were led by Love !'"

Then came the mother : "Look, my boy,  
Your angel comes who brought the child,"  
The father said ; she brimmed with joy  
Spake, "Jesus too was baby mild ;  
My yearnings dying accents are  
That fall from His undying care."

# HEAVENLY GUEST

## I

SWATHED for awhile in weeds of earth  
Near you she sits with folded wings ;  
Will you not know her till she flings  
Them starry wide to leave your hearth?—

## II

To leave it lonely dark and cold?—  
Too late imploring hands are spread ;  
Could you not see before she fled  
Light trembling out through every fold,

## III

Exhaling subtle when she smiled  
Or stirred or spake? O, gross and blind,  
Through common things a common mind  
Can see no glory breathing mild.

## IV

That shy primrose so dear to God  
A worldling's warped and jaded sense  
Calls dull insipid innocence ;  
Wilt thou too be the callous clod?

## V

Ah ! had you recognised her birth  
While yonder sat your meek-eyed dove,  
Or moved on humble tasks of love,  
Or touched to life your slumbering worth !

## VI

Ourselves to conquer and to merge  
In this the school of love we learn ;  
And helping *her* these bonds to spurn  
She lifts us up to heaven's verge.

## VII

Bestride the rocket as it flares  
Through solitudes of startled night !  
Yet know yon bird of humble flight  
In yonder cage who modest bears

## VIII

His suit of brown and trills alone  
His low sweet song through dreary days  
Is kin to him who breasts the rays,  
Bursts all in music, melts in song.

## IX

Oft folds his head beneath the wing,  
Unvoiced his joy, yet sweet the rest,  
His blithe bird-heart in peace possess ;  
So love secure may cease to sing

## X

Awhile, then if brief twilights grow,  
Let fall life's shadows, fools may cry  
"How dwindles love's felicity!"  
Love smiles who feels his heart aglow.

## XI

They shiver, muffled up in furs,  
Their blood but crawls, for ever cold ;  
If, as they croak, love turns to mould,  
Life now at least our being stirs.

## XII

These have not lived : but woodland fern  
That nods in dropping diamonds  
By some cascade—those tender fronds  
Form trees where long blue summers burn.

# CONSOLATION

## I

MEN prate of iron will in vain,  
When the flesh gives with spirit strain ;  
The colder nature, stronger frame,  
Strong character but idly claim.

## II

Now Reason reels upon her throne,  
Dense dread about his spirit grown,  
Who dares not breathe for fear to stir  
Yon Horror slumbering close to her !

## III

Madness, more awful-faced than all !  
What may he do but shuddering fall  
Upon the cold floor, praying Death  
To save him and to take his breath ?

## IV

He feels that he has failed, has failed !  
He hears it in the snow-storm wailed  
Through this dim loveless chamber now :  
List those numb finger-taps of snow !

## V

Death, pale dread friend, already here ?  
Ah me ! for youth 'tis very drear,  
With nestlings eager for the sky,  
To be torn earthward ruthlessly !

## VI

Not one warm heart to pillow on—  
Fold wings that would have sought the sun ;  
It only rests for thee to weep  
Thyself, a tired child, to sleep.

## VII

Is there no Father, one Divine ?  
Ah ! vainly doth his ear incline  
To shape thought's answering muffled roll  
Through dim vast labyrinths of soul.

## VIII

There may be the essential Love,  
In whom both he and all must move,  
Or but a blind relentless arm,  
That moulds and breaks with equal calm.

## IX

A still small voice, than thought more clear,  
Thought's echo lost, he yet may hear :  
" In faith of Love Supreme there can  
Alone be formed a perfect man."

## X

Not on the mount withdrawn He stood  
To sing that storm and calm are good,  
But walked Himself the whelming wave,  
By love to smooth, by love to save !

## XI

" I am the Son of God," He saith :  
Then grows the deep amen of Faith,  
Who solemn chaunts, " Yea, God is love,  
In whom we shall victorious prove !"

## XII

He cannot hear—the storm is loud  
And blinds him with a snowy shroud—  
On those lone heights with catching breath  
He flounders o'er the steep of death !

## XIII

Yet till the last frail fibre of strength  
Hath snapped, hold on—help speeds at length !  
Yea, even in falling, arms outspread  
To take chill darkness of the dead,

## XIV

A hand may grasp, a bosom receive,  
And warm thine own faint heart to live ;  
Embracing Death may change to one  
Who pours life's own elixir down !

## XV

Then ere the dying, if thou bind  
True mate to thee, thy heart shall find  
A simple girl excels thy dream,  
As fruit its like in troubled stream.

## XVI

Then when some dark mood passes by,  
How sweet upon that breast to lie,  
And feel the tremulous twilight swim  
Of limpid eye sad love may brim !

## XVII

Some guileless maid may wait for thee,  
My brother, though thou canst not see !  
Yet even if thy life must droop  
Ere ripening of thy fondest hope,

## XVIII

'Tis in the arms of Love thy fall :  
Faith shakes her head serene at all  
Her subtle sophist-questioners,  
And childlike "So it is" avers.

## DEAR HEAD, LIE CALM

DEAR head, lie calm upon my arm,  
Dear eyes, from mine drink mildest splendour !

So rills may leap aerial steep,  
Blue flowers they fall on mantling tender.

Eyelash so frail, inlay with trail  
Of shade her eyes, a maze of sweetness !  
My soul sinks through their dimlit blue,  
To find in them her own completeness.

Eyelash, O light on petal white  
Of lid shed soft your delicate shading !  
Lid silken-fringed and only tinged  
With vein's rathe violet faint pervading.

Lo ! now she lies with folded eyes,  
Basking at rest in mine adoring ;  
To prison the sense, so more intense,  
She veils my glance's ardent pouring.

In watering flowers we stay the showers  
Awhile, till these to roots be diving ;  
Behold ! she drinks my gaze that sinks  
Till each soul-fibre thrills new-living.

Dear head, lie calm upon my arm,  
Dear guileless face all childlike beaming,  
Ah ! soft hair's fold kindling to gold,  
Is not this more than all the dreaming ?

"LEAVE GOD'S OWN RANKS  
DRAWN UP TO FIGHT"

## I

LEAVE God's own ranks drawn up to fight,  
And strike a hand in proffered calm  
Of some fair foe to seek the calm,  
To lie with her in fields of light.

## II

Yet hark ! Hell's gathering legion-tramp !  
And if no crush of iron hoof  
Through heart and brain you feel, 'tis proof  
Death's numbness doth your spirit cramp !

## III

Forego the battle, and forego  
The kingly strength of spirit won,  
The smile Divine when all is done  
From heights of being man may know !

## IV

Yet warrior camped at close of day  
May list the lapse of some pure stream  
That lingers in the soft moonbeam,  
Gliding unheeded in the fray.

## TO A WATERLILY

O WATERLILY,  
Rendering stilly  
A meek confession,  
Sweet indiscretion,  
In star-petals of heavenly white  
Rayed forth from hidden gold of thy delight !  
Candours revealing virgin gold of heart  
That mellows linkèd snow of wings, apart  
Where lowly tips  
Dim glory lips  
While vestal-reverent they half inurn  
The shrine where holily thy flame doth burn :  
Charming soft air,  
Enthralling waters fair  
From wonted flowing strenuous intense,  
Lingering soothed for thy dear confidence !  
Silverly gleaming tenderly they wind ;  
Tremulous all thy lily tale we find,  
Pure tender tale thy soft white petals tell,  
Glassed in their kindling bosom where it fell.  
Faint airs inhume  
Thy frail perfume !  
Over thy green leaves, each a filmy boat,  
Rimmed with mild light of water where they  
float,

Petals ray forth unruffled, pure from shame,  
 Inviolable thy virgin fame,  
 The soul of thee a heavenly flame,  
 Breathing stillly,  
 O waterlily !

### BEFORE RAFFAELLE

O PURIST landscape, faint with mellow day !  
 O tranquil faces, shrined in tranquil light,  
 That Perugin, Angelico, beheld,  
 With air as listing far unearthly strains,  
 With eyes of yearning to the infinite,  
 And features lighted from serener skies !  
 We poring on you seem to gather wings,  
 Even as with stress of slowly mantling tide  
 A boat sways buoyant bedded yet in sand.  
 Your presence music-like doth round me  
 flow,

Ye seem most like a silent blow  
 Of angel-flowers that enwreathe ;  
 Surely I feel your feathers breathe  
 Thrilling about me in their sweep,  
 Yea, lift me as clear waters deep  
 When girdling round soft limbs their heave  
 Lifts grazing feet from sandy weave,  
 Unaware while our chins we lave  
 Coolly upon some azure wave.  
 So tender ravished may we float away  
 Where zephyr-like with gentle lover's breath  
 Ye from brows hot with earth's anxiety  
 May blow the hair and lure the burning out,  
 May soar inhaling deep nepenthe-draughts  
 From all embroilments of a world of woe,  
 May lose ourselves unbodied saturate  
 In palpitating mazes of the day !

### WHAT THE OLD CHURCH SAID

I MOVED a little where the church-tower rose  
 Above a close-grown belt of beech and firs,  
 And the tall pointed windows of the tower,  
 With slant flat bars of wood that broke the  
 light

Through-shining from the facing windows,  
 looked

Like the old church's melancholy eyes.  
 But as I mused, with slow deep-booming tone  
 The clock tolled one, and the sound died away.  
 It seemed as though the old church gave  
 utterance

In that slow melancholy dying toll  
 To some oppression smothering the soul.  
 I weary of the years (it seemed to say),  
 The long slow years ; I would that they  
 might cease,

Or that I might withdraw me from their eyes !  
 Am I not wearied with so many suns  
 That rise to set, and with their lavish light,  
 Crimson and orange ; with so many moons,  
 Crescent and full and waning, haunting pale  
 My lichened mullions where the ivy stirs  
 And rustles in the night-breeze, and the owl  
 With feathery face and large white open eyes  
 Sits hooting—with the clear-obscure of nights  
 Wherein the stars mount over me and go ?  
 Beautiful ! but the beauty palls upon me,  
 Ever the same, and I am very old :

I care not though the swallows dart and wheel  
 About my steeple, feeding on the wing  
 Their young exultant youth-wise in the air,  
 Which age, and fly thwart seas and rear their  
 brood

Next summer, and forget their nurturing sires ;  
 I care not though the flowers about my feet,  
 Over my graves, bud, open unaware,  
 Then loosening yield their petals to the grass,  
 And other youngling blossoms blush and blow  
 In the rich mould of parent-flowers' decay  
 Summer on summer ; while the silent clouds  
 Grow in the blue, change fleetly and are gone :  
 I care not for their change and vanishing ;  
 For these, all these fulfil themselves and die :  
 But for the glorious human things I care,  
 For all the faces through the centuries  
 I have seen lighted with a light beyond  
 The light of youth and health, a spirit-light  
 Of aspiration for eternity !

For all such faces waning one by one ;  
 Many for disappointment and for doubt  
 Before the last, but all extinguished now,  
 First one and then another through the years

Darkened, befouled, effaced in damps of death ;

Of this I weary, and for this make moan.  
For all they came as little infants here  
Opening dazed eyes upon the wonder-world,  
Brought of their parents to the christening font

And dedicated to the Father in Christ ;  
Came as blithe children chafing at long prayers ;

Came as paired lovers, with unutterable  
Love in their eyes, and vowing faithfulness  
Till death before the crowd, but in their hearts

Vowing strong love for ever and for ever !  
And I was glad and pealed a merry peal  
Of laughter from my bells triumphantly  
Up the blue sky, and the blue answered me  
With sunshine and with bird-song, and young maids

Strewed flowers before the bride who wept for joy.

Some came again cold, alienated, dull,  
With all the glory-flush died out of them  
And a fool's jeering at their nobler selves ;  
A few were faithful to their solemn vow  
Before the crowd, and till death parted them  
Loved on—and then they came again to me,  
One carried on the shoulders of six men,  
Dull, cold as clay, not to be looked upon ;  
The other with despair in poor vague eyes,  
Swathed in black crape, to leave her in the vault

With generations of illustrious dead,  
Under my feet here. I was sorrowful  
And tolled my melancholy toll for grief.  
After a few sad years he swore the same  
To another bride all buoyant like the first  
With hope and trust and joy, until he sank,  
He of the scant grey hairs and dimming eyes  
And failing spirit—and she buried him.  
So they lie side by side, his wives and he ;  
With all the generations I have seen  
Born, married, buried, over whom fair tombs  
Are carven in marble down my solemn aisles.

So they lie side by side, his wives and he,  
With no heart-burnings : never lip seeks lip

There in the darkness, never hand seeks hand.

There are no smiles—nor any weeping there.

Yet where, ah where, the sweet vows they have vowed ?

Unheeding in the coffin lies the corpse.

Where that ebullient love that brooked no bounds,

Mighty unconquerable like the dawn,  
Chariot of fire that lifts a man to heaven !

Where is it now ? Alas ! I only hear  
The ghostwind rushing moaning round my tower,

Strewing my worn stone winding-stairs with sticks

And straws from jackdaw nests high up my spire.

There the great clock, my heart, beats awfully  
With throb monotonous : anon it seems

The solemn heart of Fate ; or measured tread  
Of Time, the cold relentless skeleton,

Awfully blind, informed with ne'er a soul,  
Nay, with no dawning hope of any soul ;

Soul that, how stony pitiless soe'er,  
Knowing the deeds would falter and repent,

Nor might endure for ever to behold  
Unmoved his own monotonous dull stamp

Moment by moment crushing out some bloom  
Of life fresh wistful nestling to his feet ! . . .

I only know the solemn chaunted prayer,  
And psalm of praise men come to sing below,  
Wanders in snatches faintly up my tower,  
There to be pounced upon of maniac winds,  
Caught and devoured, and scattered all abroad !

Unheeding in the coffin lies the corpse.

'Tis all I know ; and yet the children play,

The merry human children o'er the graves,  
About their parents' headstones mouldering,

Like fairy boats upon green-mounded waves :  
I hear their laughter on the sunny air,

For they know not, and woe is me, I know !  
And so I weary of the slow sad years—

Would they might cease, or I withdraw from them,

Sink to a ruinous heap and be no more !

## "AS A TALE THAT IS TOLD"

## I

IN flowers at morn a girl and boy,  
While o'er them Spring's young leaflets toy,  
Sleep locked in arms of mutual joy.

## II

They babbled near the babbling brook,  
While ringdoves coo'd from greenest nook,  
Till sleep soft shadows o'er them shook.

## III

At hand shy rabbits nibbling sit,  
And close the speckled thrush hath lit,  
While o'er their limbs gemmed insects flit.

## IV

Where vivid-raptured foliage gloats  
In swim of soaring day that floats  
How tender ! yon forget-me-nots

## V

Are dimmed, it seems, with mist-like trail ;  
Some chilling Presence makes to pale  
The woodland growth where'er it sail !

## VI

Where each on each the children lean  
Some fingers pitiless unseen  
Their twining hands apart would wean.

## VII

It creeps the loving sleepers o'er ;  
They stir, they wake ; nor as of yore  
In eyes of each to dote and pore.

## VIII

They look abroad to earth and sky,  
Till other human forms are nigh ;  
Then each to one of these will fly.

## IX

So close they fold in alien arms,  
The farewell scarce their accent warms,  
They pass so rapt in alien charms !

## X

Note such a new-made fondest pair,  
And list how deep they both can swear  
That nought shall part them foul or fair !

## XI

But look, upon the shadowed mound  
One sinks and sinks in deadly swound ;  
He chafes her, kneeling on the ground.

## XII

With anguish in his widened eye,  
"She shall not—he'll not let her—die !"   
She cannot hear his frenzied cry.

## XIII

Again the boy is laid in sleep,  
Nigh where his chosen slumbers deep  
For evermore—and near him creep

## XIV

Those mist-like trailing garments chill ;  
Can Lethe dew from them distil,  
To cool the forehead where they feel ?

## XV

He wakes with half the trouble flown ;  
Soon one who views him thus alone  
Consoling arms hath round him thrown.

## XVI

Hail ! Time's mysterious healing art,  
Who soothes the deadly-rankling smart  
And pieces many a broken heart !

## XVII

Each counts to find one curve of all  
Full answering his proper call,  
Yet echoing with sublimer fall.

## XVIII

But in long years' close intercourse,  
Ignoble chance will blow perforce  
Trim coverings from hidden sores.

XIX

And lo ! disgust—they meet so cold,  
Scarce their bewildered memories hold  
Remembrance of the straining fold !

XX

While hark ! Time's ghostly laughter rings—  
“To what I snatch man frantic clings,  
Yet o'er his new toy laughs and sings,

XXI

And boasts, “’Tis wise and well to bow,  
The past inevitable now ;  
True beats my heart, though smooth my  
brow.”

XXII

Poor fool, it flatters thee to prate ;  
In May the bird will find new mate :  
Disdain not thou thy kindred's fate.”

XXIII

And yet to me 'tis like disgrace  
That one we think our soul's embrace  
Should vanish thence and leave no trace.

XXIV

What then is human love ? Our best,  
Our strong abiding power confest ;  
Yet that seems mortal like the rest !

XXV

Nay ! Time, we are not wholly thine ;  
The blind-born man will not repine,  
But he who once knew Summer-shine.

XXVI

The brute more meek thy shackle wears ;  
Man chafes against the prison bars,  
His pale face yearning to the stars ! . . .

XXVII

Then sudden through the woodland rose  
A wail of wind uproarious ;  
The huddling foliage pales and bows.

XXVIII

For choked with surging wrath, disdain,  
That Phantom strove to fashion plain  
The crushing sound, “In vain, in vain !”

XXIX

So, when beneath some belfry-bells  
One musing hears the organ swells,  
A people's prayer the pauses fills.

XXX

But oft the wind's harsh-clamouring gust  
Drowns all, as if the dead men's dust  
Down those appalling mouths were thrust !

XXXI

Nay, if with dolèd power yet weak,  
Even lower things will heavenward break,  
Shall we whose conscious spirits seek

XXXII

With mightier stress a myriad-fold  
To burst the fretting dykes that hold  
In parent ocean to be rolled,

XXXIII

Shall we alone all vainly strive  
Ourselves may more supremely live,  
That nobler love in us may thrive ?

XXXIV

Nay then, aver yon feeble rills  
May wear their slow course down the hills,  
But when with these the torrent fills,

XXXV

The torrent shall not surge away,  
Leap, whelming all the rocks with spray,  
To still its longing in the sea !

“TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?”<sup>1</sup>

PRELUDE

To note while lingering nigh some ivied  
porch  
A fond old couple tottering to church  
Among the grassy graves, with snowy hair,  
Holding soft hands of children fresh and fair.  
And muse we once were confident as they,  
Who sad forebode the staff new chosen may  
Break when we lean full in the perilous way !

<sup>1</sup> See note C.

To list float faintly through the open door  
On summer airs the music that of yore  
They loved and sung, father and mother dear,  
On wings of humble hymns from care and fear

Rapt far into God's home of crystal clear—  
To muse we pure and trustful children then  
Soared by their side afar from mortal ken,  
Such homely strains to chariots of fire  
Changed by the breath of faith and strong desire

(Alas! the glow has faded from them quite :  
They than yon bee's drone in his flowery flight

Have now scarce more of meaning unto thee,  
Save for a savour of sweet memory  
And reverence for human hearts that cry!)—  
To gaze by some worn father's shadowy bed  
On boyhood's darling friend an hour dead,  
To stand there with a mother blind for tears.  
Nor breathe the hope that she when vision clears

Shall see so clear, yearning to tell her now  
And help to melt from her some sorrow-snow,  
Yet only clasp her, for thou dost not know. . . .  
. . . May this be nought . . . or very hope-  
less woe?

## 1

Dark was the night : the great cathedral  
square  
Lay desert, wind and rain swept everywhere,  
Vacant of men the ancient terrace trees  
Gloomed sullen o'er where swollen the river  
flees

Far down : between some phantom piers at  
hand

That bound the portico wherein I stand  
Rain ever drips and beats with bounding flash  
In stony pools hollowed of myriad plash,  
Gleams in sick gleam from huddling dwellings  
mean

That on the night in ghastly squalor lean  
With gabled roofs that dusk projecting grow,  
O'er each a lowering frowning beetlebrow.  
While from the lanes and filthy courts there  
ring

Cries, yells anon that leave me shivering

Howe'er from distance dulled, for here the  
poor

Herd, litter, agonise and still endure.  
Then unaware stalked awful facing me  
The hoar World-Sorrow and blank mystery !

I hid my face and, turning to the door,  
Pushed strong the ponderous quilting hung  
before,  
And gained the sanctuary : how the light  
Breathed bland and warm unconscious of the  
night !

A suave, a fragrant luminous blue air  
Pervades and dims the solemn regions there :  
From calm aspiring of majestic pier  
That turns and mingles with its neighbour  
near

In flexile spandril lost in holy gloom  
Of high clerestory and triforium,  
To yon bowed sea of suppliants that flow  
Expansive down long nave and aisle below  
About grey arches fluent refluxent,  
Even to the jewelled high altar eminent  
With golden chalice, triptych, crucifix,  
With spangled image and flamy candlesticks.  
Below stiff gold of vestment and brocade  
On clustered priest, fair acolytes arrayed  
In lace and linen thuribles are swinging,  
Whence curl soft indolent blue odours  
winging.

And all their subtle breath doth permeate,  
Fusing to one mild splendour all the state ;  
A constellation rich unto the core,  
Yet unobtruding all the radiant store,  
Somnolent as of homage full secure.  
Only when priests in murmuring bend low  
The slumbrous glory wakes to flash and flow :  
List from yon white throats of the boyish  
choir

Sails music, seraph plumed with hallowed  
fire,

Saileth and soareth, flooding all the soul,  
Heralding the tempestuous organ-roll  
Of sound insurgent whirling men aloft,  
Hither and thither rapt, or cradled soft  
In tender curling side-eddies like leaves  
Some headlong torrent-flood no longer  
grieves !

Until behold the priest on marble stairs  
Of the high altar in two hands upbears  
The sacred elements, and prostrate all  
As by one breath from God we bow and fall,  
One multitude adoring ; since 'tis here  
Yon outer Mystery of guilt and fear  
And suffering, who treadeth year by year  
The same slow wheel whose rungs are living  
fire,

Worm of a never-dying dumb desire,  
From everlasting inextinguishable,  
To everlasting a devouring hell,  
'Tis here, 'tis here alone one may resolve—  
Here only we the dark enigma solve,  
That agelong secret of our destiny  
Princes and wise men sought with bitter cry  
From the beginning, unavailing quest,  
To innocent babes bequeathing their unrest.  
But now at length behold from eyes Divine  
Response triumphant on the ages shine !  
I kneeled and worshipped, feeding on the  
Wonder  
That ordaineth the wild turmoil from under.

Yet as the stormful organ over us  
Pealed surging through the fabric tremulous,  
Betwixt unrolling banners of full sound  
At intervals I seemed with awe profound  
To know some mightier Tempest travelling  
round ;

It grides with rush of wheeling pinion  
Caught struggling in the tower's fretted stone,  
That quakes to front such visitant alone ;  
Sniffs like some famished thing that prowls  
anigh

Wandering round and round with hungry eye ;  
Anon with such a maniac fury-shock  
Charging, the minster seems to reel and  
rock

For all its amplitude of stately calm—  
Yet is it more than momentary qualm ?  
For lo ! the wind aloft with desolate wail  
Dies, as for aye the poured-out heart must  
fail !

Nay but the frenzy only smoulders, burns,  
Flares forth anew ; for hark ! the foe returns,  
Shrieking to some who follow, a mad guide  
To thunder-legions trampling far and wide

Filling all heaven ; now precipitate  
Flinging them crashing like some stroke of  
Fate

Full on the hoary venerable church ;  
Until methought the marble seemed to lurch  
And swim beneath my feet ; the arches heaved  
Even as limber trees by tempest grieved :  
Blindly flashed a pallid-purple light,  
And smote each countenance to ghastly white,  
Bleaching all gold and silver, while the flame  
Of lamp and altar-candle dwindle tame,  
As though by Day surprised they paled for  
shame !

Then swift a pang of insecurity  
Shot through my frame sharp, uncontrollably,  
Howbeit all grew firm again and still,  
Nor any soul but mine foreboded ill.  
Did they not feel the very basement quake  
Under their feet, nor all the minster shake  
And shudder as with ague, that so calm  
They list the music and inhale the balm ?  
I may not pause for all the ominous terror  
Of outer night's inclemency, and error  
That may be doom of mine unwitting whither  
One seeking shelter may repair from hither :  
Once more the ponderous portal-quilt I push,  
And forth into the night-embroilment rush.

Blown by the whirlwind, lashed of driving  
rain,  
Groping through solid darkness I sustain  
Hardly my troubled and desponding heart  
That feels her youth's full-trusted cable part,  
With wildered swerving foot that hopes no  
goal . . .  
Yet from her swound anon awakes my soul,  
Craving some shelter.

II

Soon from forth the dark  
Emerges to my vision gaunt and stark  
A pale bleared structure with a cyclops eye  
Pent dull-lit in its narrowing forehead nigh.  
Then something urged that I should enter  
here :  
Mean was the aspect of the place and drear :

Large glazed square windows, yawning  
chasms of black,  
Slit either dismal wall, guarding the track  
Of either rigid passage through the pews,  
Tall varnished pens that swallow men and  
bruise.

At intervals lank poles of iron prop  
Green painted shelved broad galleries that  
drop,

Teeming with sober-vestured folk and trim,  
Smug, iron-grey, respectable and grim,  
Flat whitewashed is the ceiling, and depend  
Burners that flare with flame from end to end:  
While from a pulpit roomy prominent,  
Thereto the chapel's place of honour lent,  
One in black raiment to a docile crowd  
With accents blandly confident and loud  
Expounds the riddle of the universe,  
Complacent doth the seamless robe traverse  
Woven in logic-looms, unwrinkling dress  
Warrant to fit a Titan's nakedness :  
Shameless unwieldy Nature dons a vest,  
Smirks primly decent in a Sunday-best.  
No venerable superstition here,  
But all inferred coherently and clear ;  
And we admired our teacher dexterous,  
Shuffling his words, expert, ingenious.

Yet unware some door wide open flew,  
And a wet wind unmannerly rushed through,  
Sorely the staid folk discomposing, ruffling—  
And lo ! within the yawning chasm a scuffling,  
An uproar more unseemly, smote the ear,  
As if one pushed and fought to enter here.  
A grimed and ragged man with eyes to fear,  
And wolfish lean lank famine-pinched face,  
Obtrude his squalor on the holy place,  
And holy washed respectable smug folk !  
Such monstrous portent may in sooth pro-  
voke

Yon pompous beadle, visaged like an ox,  
Clad in gold lace, full-feeding, orthodox—  
Since the low creature insolently braved  
His ban official, snatched the thing it craved—  
Such wrath, in sooth, well-founded may we  
think,

If the mean wretch were choleric with  
drink !

List now some dead sound of a massy blow,  
And dull thud of a body fallen below  
Two stone steps on the street ! Oppression  
cold,  
Some choking sense, of many a breath takes  
hold ;  
A feeble scream ; much smelling salts ; the  
door  
Has slammed and closed securely as before.  
Swallowing wrath, the preacher quietly  
Resumes : " Beloved, we might have been  
as he ;  
Is not grace special, sovereign, and free ? "

Problem of life ! how theologic wit  
Can feel all round, beneath, the roots of it,  
Dig up the mystery so cleanly laid  
In a glib formula as in a spade !  
And while I listened erst with night shut out,  
Rain, wind and storm, and all the rabble rout  
Of human things to-night familiar,  
I could believe life's gordian tangles are  
A mere child's puzzle to the fingers deft  
Of faith, and needing nowise to be cleft.  
But what if that unmentionable look  
Of vague grey horror which the Darkness  
took

By yon cathedral in a lull of storm,  
Confronting me, a ghastly-visaged form,  
Should follow even when one turns to fly,  
Blighting the soul with search of deadly eye,  
Not skulking baffled there beyond the porch,  
But staring livid into very church !  
What if the monster coiled immense and far,  
Enwinding all yet spied by ne'er a star,  
Torpid, piled o'er with gloom, voluminous,  
All unware slide noiseless up to us  
Out of the slumbrous folds a hideous head,  
Hooded, flat, slimy, eyed with baleful red !  
Sand-forts inviolate hoar babes we pile—  
While the tide lingers—for a little while !  
Even before the shock of ghastly fight  
'Twixt famished sin and sleek full-feeding  
right,  
Here on the threshold of the pauper's Brother,  
On His self-exiled from heaven, no other !  
Even before, while eloquent he spake,  
Making all plain, the teacher, would awake

Peeping a moment in my soul the doubt  
 If such sure axioms court the laying-out  
 Beside yon truths of gold by Reason won  
 From their dark stubborn matrix one by one?  
 Now Conscience outraged round to Reason  
 wheeled,  
 Struck palm in hers, and her full triumph  
 sealed :  
 Once more I shuddering felt the pavement  
 lurch,  
 Once more abrupt I hurried from the  
 church . . .

Out into rain, and wind, and gloom again—  
 Behold ! a gaunt fierce woman did sustain  
 Upon her lap the head of him who fell  
 There on the lower step, in staunching well  
 The blood upon his forehead with her dress,  
 Muttering thick curses on the righteousness  
 Her graceless drunken paramour that smote.  
 And lo ! their spurned, skeleton child remote  
 Stood in its rags to jeer the parents old,  
 Scalding the hag more blasphemous to scold.  
 Look ! by yon bleared gaslamp nigh at hand  
 Night shameless disemboгуing where I stand  
 Her reeking ducts of human misery,  
 Despair, and sin—beholding which I flee !

III

Unwitting whither, even as erewhile :  
 But the dream bore me over many a mile  
 This bout I trow—foundations must remain,  
 Though every superstructure ill sustain  
 Assaults of Time ; stable, sublime, arranged  
 Of old by seers, but in change unchanged,  
 And therefore perishable, doomed to fall,  
 Though many a weakling cling to each for all !

Unto what goal arrived ? 'Tis evening now,  
 Not night—no storm—and surely I should  
 know  
 The place ! Yon hills that rear themselves  
 afar,  
 Only more solid ashen sky they are  
 In circumfused grey vapours that involve,  
 Yet cannot whole-absorbing them dissolve ;  
 Their lifted crests, dim heads of skeleton,  
 Over yon leaden lake, more pale than wan

Immerses their faint feet, filmy and dull,  
 Remote and sad, like Death impenetrable !  
 Wide leagues of stern brown barren region  
 nigher  
 Mere cinders of an old world's dwindled  
 fire ;  
 Cinereous ragged crags, ravines that wind  
 Amid their umber shadow silent, blind,  
 Nor thereout ever to the open find  
 Their way again : but nearer than the brown  
 Tract with wan sulphur tinct around is grown  
 Thin rusty wheat in patches, a hot breeze  
 O'erwhispers fitfully ; some olive-trees  
 Stunted and cavernous shiver, wax pale  
 To feel it passing, breathing a low wail,  
 On either side the stony arid path,  
 Which on the left of one descending hath  
 A glen that widens till one may descry  
 Fruit trees full-foliaged, fig and mulberry,  
 All in the twilight massed ambiguous—  
 Skirting the hill-side steep and devious.

While twilight deepens I behold beneath  
 Far in the glen, nested as in a wreath  
 Of foliage, some village of rough stone  
 With level roofs ; one special house upgrown  
 On culminating ground into a tower.  
 And lo ! anear it now at gloaming hour  
 Forth gleams one light of mildly-bodied flame,  
 Alone, as lit to beacon one who came  
 Along the path habitually at close  
 Of day to seek in that sweet home repose.  
 Intense the solitary stillness here,  
 Hot and oppressive weighs the atmosphere,  
 And all my spirit prostrate sinks oppress  
 With futile lifelong effort after rest.

Then I cried, Jesus, dost not Thou re-  
 main,  
 Even if all men's worship of Thee wane ?  
 Thee, Thee, we need—O Jesus, come again !  
 And then the spot, the region where I  
 stood,  
 A very reflex of my desolate mood,  
 Seemed half-familiar—surely I should know :  
 Did I not stand here not so long ago ?  
 It dawns, it breaks, familiar verily !  
 For this should be the path to Bethany !

Why then, ah why! tell, spirit of my dream,  
 Here lead me? not in mockery I deem—  
 Here may I list what He the Master saith,  
 Here by the source primeval of our faith,  
 Sweet desert spring bubbling among the stones,  
 Purer than after girdling human thrones!

Nay but, I cried, we need thy presence now,  
 Thy kingly gaze, and thine imperial brow.  
 How many a long league onward have we travelled,

In what a labyrinth of thorns enravell'd  
 With halting foot we wander—O that yet  
 Thou wert beside us! do we not forget,  
 Through all yon hazy distance of the years,  
 A world new-found of alien hopes and fears,  
 Wellnigh forget the features of thy face,  
 Thy gait, thine accent, yearning to retrace  
 Vainly thine image fading in our soul,  
 That flickers, wavers, and evades control?  
 We halt with knowledge all unboded then,  
 Fevered explorers, much-adventuring men,  
 Now on some hill foreseeing through a glass  
 Far flowering futures where we hope to pass,  
 Now floundering in deadliest morass,  
 Haunted with lurking flames of tiger-eyes,  
 Probing dusk hearts of loneliest mysteries.

Full oft we hesitate opprest with doubt,  
 Longing to fling our burdens, wearied out,  
 For ever from us, for the way is long,  
 About our feet confounding shadows throng,  
 Neither discern we plainly any more  
 To what far goal we tend, nor off what shore  
 Erewhile we drifted, or at whose command,  
 Or if before us lieth any land.  
 Lost, wildered, orphaned in this new-found world,

What relish in its glories morn-impearled  
 Of fruit and blade and flower about us tost,  
 To us who had a Father, and have lost!  
 We had a leader once, and he is gone.  
 Do we not stand in bitter need of one?  
 Arise, be gracious unto this our day—  
 Once more desert Thy heavens and point the way!

Look all along dim regions overpast  
 Since that dear morn when Thou wert with us last,  
 Name them by name, assure us where we are,  
 Where lies our journey, to what goal afar.  
 Yea, tell us also, whisper in our ear  
 Of Him whom deep in silence we revere!  
 Ever He lives we know from age to age,  
 Mover and moved in mortal pilgrimage;  
 Yet our wings fail us that would fain aspire  
 'Neath that blank face of our eternal Sire,  
 Ever more baffling wistful human eyes  
 With each new lore man's mortal life supplies:  
 Ever we learn He is not what He seemed;  
 Need now one teach us what He may be deemed.

Thou didst reveal Him to the world of old;  
 Are we not also hungering to be told  
 What Name would haunt thy burning lips if Thou  
 Could come again to dwell among us now?

Gentle and strong and faithful, just and wise;

Such an one set among confusing cries  
 And aims of ours—who with our own flesh fight,

Each taking each for foeman in the night!  
 Return, O Saviour, garbed as men use to-day!  
 All guileless hearts must worship and obey;  
 Though worldly men yet harden into stone  
 Reviling souls more human than their own!  
 Keep us the while, O keep us sensitive  
 To those who most reflect Thee while we live!  
 Who cower as one might in a prison flung  
 Stunned of harsh wrangling in a stranger tongue,

Yet roused to rapture if some casement swing  
 Opening a way to airs of odorous wing,  
 Airs, happy elfins wandering at will  
 O'er sunny meadows taking all their fill  
 Of flowery plesance; from far fields they come

Dewing dim eyes with memories of home—  
 —Though worldlings turn a dull impassive face

O'er such sweet glimpses of a heavenlier place.

. . . Might He come back, come only for  
 an hour,  
 What were the wealth of all the worlds for  
 dower  
 Weighed with it? for the secret of some  
 power  
 Over our baser nature should He give,  
 That slowly coffins men while yet they live,  
 Reason, affections, aspirations high  
 Tranced rigid, reft of strength to move or cry!  
 To Him the ghestliest boding one might bare,  
 Nor fear repression of some witless stare,  
 Or any harsh frown of intolerance;  
 Yea one might court the lightning of His  
 glance  
 In deep hidden chambers where no counte-  
 nance  
 Of human foe nor human friend hath pried;  
 Though He would know us, know us far  
 and wide,  
 Scorning nor rose nor livid poison flowers  
 Nature prolific on her children showers!  
 And ah! how oft when none are by we groan,  
 O for one person mingling with our own!  
 Ye named us friends! are soul and body one?  
 Or did ye name in cynical sarcasm?  
 For have we bridged the ever-sundering  
 chasm  
 'Twixt man and man, who leaning e'er so  
 much  
 Never, howe'er they strain, with hearts may  
 touch?  
 Yet He were not unkind or alien-souled,  
 From shy warm wistful touches shrinking cold  
 Like common friends when heart yearns forth  
 to heart,  
 Longing to tear all sundering swathes apart—  
 One warm hour wanton to men's longing  
 lends  
 Semblance of pale life and as wanton ends;  
 But He, methinks, He were the Friend of  
 friends!  
  
 Might He not bless this ailing age with  
 health  
 Languishing faint with surfeit of her wealth,  
 Toiling to hoard and of repletion dying,  
 Her vital juice unfunctioned for supplying

To every organ, member, of her frame  
 Due nourishment each one from food may  
 claim?  
 Yea, we are rich, and yet the people die  
 Of all their human nature's atrophy!  
 Starved hearts and brains and limbs but toil  
 and toil  
 One pampered organ of the frame to spoil.  
 Might He not solve this problem of the poor  
 Who litter, agonise, and still endure?

Vain! ah, what multitudes through all the  
 years  
 Have strewn and burdened with such hopes  
 and fears  
 Meek little-heeding earth, with human tears  
 Made humid these dumb stones as I have  
 done,  
 Since Thou, O Master, camest here alone  
 Weeping divinest woes were ever known!  
 Mary and Martha long their village sweet  
 Forgets, and where, ah! where, Thy sacred  
 feet?  
 Would they come back, come only for an  
 hour,  
 What were the wealth of all the worlds for  
 dower  
 Weighed with it? . . .

. . . Then I slowly was aware  
 Of one approaching as I halted there.  
 Near and more near some calm firm foot-  
 steps came;  
 And while I listened strangely all my frame  
 Grew tense with expectation, tingling through  
 With some blest awe of wonder, while in view  
 That pilgrim rose upon the winding path,  
 And paused five paces from me where it hath  
 An olive leaning over; yet the night  
 Would suffer none to read the features right.

His raiment grave, so far as I might see,  
 The garb of common men appeared to be,  
 As natives of the land are wont to use—  
 I only felt my spirit could not choose  
 But know, and spring to meet Him, as the  
 lark,  
 Of Dawn soft wakened, from the dewy dark

Inevitably springs into her breast !  
 I could but falter to His knees for rest,  
 Bury my face and lose all hold of thought,  
 With such absorbing bliss of wonder fraught  
 His presence ! feeling flooded all my soul,  
 And from mine eyes in sweet warm weeping  
 stole.

In kneeling I could only feel, not see,  
 The calm of some eternal eyes on me,  
 Yea and I think some hands upon my head  
 Peace passing understanding o'er me shed—  
 Yet I remember as I knelt I heard  
 When far and faint upon the hill there stirred  
 A night air melancholy washing through  
 Tree after tree in travelling till it blew  
 Hot on my neck, and wrung the olive nigh  
 With shuddering, and wandered with a sigh  
 Of inarticulate want along the glen—  
 And as my glance fell on the raiment then,  
 A ghostly gleam of light lay on the brown  
 Stuff woven of goat's hair, upon tuft and  
 stone  
 Of bank and path.

Then sudden to the face  
 I looked in ecstasy—some shades efface,  
 In part from olive-foliage—yet why  
 So pallid, rigid, dim, that longing I  
 Can shape no image of the countenance ?  
 But while with some vague terror now my  
 glance  
 I rivet, ever to more fading change  
 The face I hungered for appears to range :  
 Until once more I fancy I can feel  
 The ghastly shiver and the drunken reel  
 Of earth alas ! I well must recognise !  
 At which to frenzy stung my spirit cries—  
 And though He seems to melt from out my  
 grasp,  
 My death-dewed hands with fierce despairing  
 clasp  
 And clutch his skirt—"Ah ! perish all save  
 Thee,"  
 Broke forth my soul, "but Jesus ! stay with  
 me :  
 Thee, Thee to hold though all the worlds be  
 gone !"  
 And yet my forehead smote the senseless stone

As I fell forward, plucking empty air . . .  
 . . . Howbeit some kind accents found me  
 there :

"Christ is arisen ; seek not the living here !  
 I will not leave you, I will come to you.  
 He that will do the will of God shall know !"

### PAN

AH ! Nature, would that I before I pass  
 Might thrill with joy of thy communion  
 One childlike only knowing thee from far !  
 Love we may well, for surely one were nought  
 Without the other, intermarrying breath ;  
 Nature the systole, thought the diastole  
 Of one Divine forever-beating Heart.  
 Feeding from her maternal breast we grow  
 Full to our height of stately dominance,  
 And yet create, yea dower as we grow  
 Her with all colour, form and comeliness.  
 Nature the heaving of a tender breast  
 Revealing inspiration from within,  
 Sweet rending of a calyx, telling clear  
 Expansion of the spirit's folded flower,  
 Nature the lake where looking long we fall  
 With our own likeness tremulous in love.

Surely the blind bliss buoying up a lark  
 Floating in sunlight over nests in May,  
 Bliss of mere living, amorous ecstasy,  
 Undulates echo from a lover's heart  
 That palpitates above a maiden won !  
 Simple the bird-bliss, but the human flushed  
 With solemn lights from two immensities  
 Of Past and Future, from the battle-field  
 Where joy was wrested a rich spoil from pain,  
 From vistas of the eagle-visioned soul  
 That widen aye to far infinity,  
 Whence comes the sisters Joy and Sorrow  
 meet  
 Oft by the same mysterious fount of tears.

Ah ! must the bird-bliss, full irradiate  
 As any dewdrop thrilling in the morn,  
 Waver, ex hale like dew, or like a seed  
 Orbed fair before it moulders in the dark

Moist earth to formless mystery of growth,  
 Falter at fliming of a far-off cloud,  
 Feel unaware a trouble in the spring  
 Of young serene unhazed limpidity;  
 Changefully fed through channels of long  
     years,  
 Emerge profound experience of Man,  
 Fruition dusk of sorrow and of sin?  
 Wait only till the dew returns in rain,  
 Wait only till the formless germ shall flower,  
 Wait only till the stream becomes the sea,  
 Wait only till humanity fulfils  
 The cycle of a destiny sublime,  
 Entering bliss more mellow and more large,  
 Yet like the bird's full flawless and serene !—  
 All mortal happiness a reflex faint  
 From hidden rainbow far transcending ours. . .

Last culminating unaware decline  
 Must we toward the drear aphelion,  
 Once more expansive? hath the Universe  
 Infinite systems, each one with his own  
 Orbit of growth, his fringe of dulse and shells,  
 High-water and low-water line for each?  
 What if our spirits and our bodies here  
 But re-emerge ever transmigrated  
 Through everlasting from the Ineffable?  
 May they not still be with us after all,  
 Heroes and seers unto whom we yearn  
 O'er yon far sundering ocean of wan years?  
 Renewing ever an immortal youth—  
 Straitened, amazed, and weary in the rush  
 Unresting of the Universal Life,  
 Sloughing old personality, anon  
 Among the living with a more or less,  
 But ever foster-children of the time?

Yet unaware we light upon a stray  
 So lonely, weird, unfellowed among men,  
 So startling with resemblance to the world  
 Of tribes uncouth, outlandish and remote,  
 Or those we marvelling hold commune with  
 All indistinct through fading portraiture  
 Of art or creeds outworn, faint chronicles;  
 Grim pleasantry of nature it appears  
 To keep this old-world denizen till now  
 Alone bewildered in an alien age!  
 Or hath he slept some strange enchanted sleep

While generations fledted slowly by?  
 Behold! how wan and withered the fresh  
     page  
 Of Life he read in when he sank to rest  
 Now he resumes! above his shoulder look!  
 In sooth I know how many pages on  
 O world we are! Yet something it may  
     chance  
 We have let slip of what may profit still!  
 . . . Come then lift high the choral hymn of  
     praise  
 That ever grows from rolling world and sea,  
 From angel, fiend, and hesitating man,  
 Who only with bewildered air sustains  
 That ever-pealing anthem unto One  
 Whose Form is the all-glorious Universe,  
 In ever-shifting accent, symbol, word,  
 Reverent, loving, wondering, with awe,  
 Humbly elate that in us for awhile  
 He deigns to lighten into consciousness,  
 That in the Son of Man Love full-beheld  
 His face, and lo! it was the face of God.

You blessed innocent living animals,  
 Through whom yon mountains self-involved  
     in gloom,  
 And yon far fathomless unresting sea,  
 Sounding the whole harmonic scale of things,  
 Pass ever in slow travail up to man,  
 Have I not loved you, conscious brotherhood,  
 Ah! how much more than cold unlovely men  
 Dead callous all to man's prerogative,  
 Shut in some frigid blank fool's privilege  
 Of state or wealth and trampling fellow fools!  
 These have I loved not; rather mellow birds  
 Upon the bough and sheeny creeping things  
 Among green grass, red squirrels in the  
     beech,  
 Such have I loved, some faithful-hearted  
     hound  
 Shaggy, brown-eyed, that pants with lolling  
     tongue,  
 Fair antlered deer of my ancestral glades,  
 All these companions chosen have I loved,  
 All these with what men foolish libellous  
 (For all is life) have named inanimate—  
 Cohesion, chemical affinities,  
 These but the earliest grey gleam of Love

Dawning in light, air, water, rock or stone,  
And in faint fringes of organic life  
Already blossoming through rainbow-rise  
Of sweet desire to spiritual love !

O wondrous interchange of services,  
Honours and functions in the universe !  
Disdainful isolation in a world  
Where nought may be sufficing to itself,  
And where the noblest may the least suffice :  
Wherefore wise lovers count not anything  
In all the worlds for common or unclean.  
The meanest reptile, if it only be,  
By only being proves a right to be,  
A use that failing the machinery  
Of all the worlds had fallen out of gear.  
Thou fated slayer, slay not like a beast,  
In a blind panic, but remembering.  
Look steadily till through the loathly crust  
A soul puts forth a feeler seeking thine !  
Creatures uncouth, yet these are on their way,  
Blind and still distant from the goal you touch,  
Yet fellow pilgrims verily with you ;  
Dare you affirm there live not anywhere,  
Nor in the teeming infinite dark womb  
Of awful Nature ever shall be born,  
Beings of glory so transcending yours  
As ye transcend some annulated worm ?  
Nay day by day the lower forms are lost,  
Yield all their own and re-emerge in man :  
And so the coral of our myriad lives  
Accumulates the sunny reef to be—  
While yet in part, a soothing dream to me,  
We may remingle with the lowlier life. . .

O blood that boils restless rebellious !  
O passionate desiring and despair !  
Say shall ye lapse anon to whence ye came,  
Subside once more into the lovelier life  
Of aimless airs unfettered and serene,  
Of buoyant seas that sparkle under them,  
Of unrepining cool meek-blooded flowers  
Fair quiet fragrant, into laughing grass  
Dishevelled and deflowered of warm wind ?  
Life faint of heart, pale, haunting, insincere !  
Divine aspiring like an ermine robe  
Fretted to dust with moths of every day !  
Sink, sink, O swell of vain-aspiring wave

Into your trough of earlier lowlihead,  
Pass to some innocent elfin of sleek fur,  
His nest the ripe wheat and his wine the dew !

And shall we climb, ascension infinite,  
From star to star? explore from world to  
world—  
Gods reigning yonder in the tranquil stars?  
Death ! what is Death? a turning-point of  
Life  
Winding so sharp the way dips out of sight,  
Seeming to end, yet winding on for ever  
Through teeming glories of the Infinite.  
Look with bold eyes unquailing in the face  
Of that foul haunting phantom, it will fade,  
Melt to the face of some familiar friend. . .

One selfsame Spirit breathing evermore  
Rouses in each the momentary wave,  
One water and one motion and one wind,  
Now feeble undulation myriadfold,  
Now headlong mountain thunder-clothed and  
crowned  
With foamy lightning; such we name Zer-  
duscht,  
Dante, Spinoza, or Napoleon—  
The motion travels, and the wave subsides. . .

May cold ascetic hard, ill-favoured, crude  
Ever persuade me vision and fond play  
Of sense about fair fleshly loveliness  
Of youth in man or woman is accurst—  
Since God hath made the spirit, but a fiend  
Hath mocked it with a syren phantom-  
flesh?—

Nay, to mine ear 'tis rankest blasphemy !  
For is not flesh the shadow of the soul,  
Her younger sister, both alike Divine?  
Yea verily ! for when I love a friend  
How may I sunder body from the soul?  
Few win my love, but they who win it  
seem  
Ever well-favoured to me, and I greet  
All comeliness of colour and of form,  
Mere side reverse of spiritual grace.  
Yea, limbs well turned and bodies almond-  
smooth  
Full fair and white in maiden or in youth,

With what sense-thrillings may attend on these ;

All lusty might of supple athletic men ;  
Are surely worthy reverence like flowers,  
Or like the culminating heart and soul.  
Only to each one yield his very own :  
Yield to young sense his toy of fantasy,  
And never frown until he glides to steal  
The royal sceptre from Intelligence,  
Or crown of light from spiritual Love.  
Nor dare to maim lives infinite Divine  
Seeking to graft one pale monotonous flower ;  
For is not Being thirsting to exhaust  
His all exhaustless capability ?  
Evil mere vantage-ground for an advance,  
If not for thee, yet for the universe,  
And so for thee as member of the whole.

But well may Nature's innocent wantoning  
Be loved of men : she whispers of the nest  
Whence we have flown, she lisps our language  
low,

A sweet child-mimic, she is very fair,  
Hiding coy secrets from her lovers all  
Who will abide and listen at her heart ;  
Yea she will sorrow with your sorrow, sing,  
Dance, leap for gladness if your mood be  
gay,

Flout ne'er nor lightly fling away your love,  
Or lure to whelm in labyrinths of woe.  
Her gentle breath, her breath is very sweet,  
Breath of lush vegetation in the dew  
Of a warm summer evening heavy faint  
With slumbrous prodigal unbosoming  
Of secret odours, delicate and shy !  
If quiet lying heart to heart with her  
Lost in the tranquil limpid of her eyes,  
Will she not lull us with a lullaby  
Soft marvellous, with spell beyond belief  
To soothe one worn with conflict and with  
pain,

Sweet as a revelation from a star,  
Sweet as a melody from elfin land  
Woven from breath of grasses and frail flowers  
And airs low tinkling tiny twinkling bells,  
Will she not whisper of a lovelier life,  
Beautiful, true, spontaneous and calm,  
Guileless and gentle, bountiful and free ?

## IN MEMORIAM THACKERAY

THIS morn while roving o'er the wonted  
page

How many an eye arrested on it grew  
Terribly fascinate, and breaths were held  
A moment for dismay to read the words  
Messengers of calamity to all !  
How little looked for scaring us there stands  
This morning early haunting every hearth  
The pale and mournful phantom of thy  
loss !

Never again the noble rugged head  
And silver locks my privilege to see . . .

Great human artist, lover of the true,  
Deep skilled to feel the solemn pulse of man  
Now beating grandly full, now fluttering  
faint !

Great satirist who with unquailing front  
Dealt stern tremendous blows on laurelled  
lies

And baseness panoplied in golden mail  
Imperial-purpled, swarmed about with slaves !  
These named him " cynic " that with ruthless  
hand

From them, stage-kings who thought to pass  
for true,

He tore false trapping, stripped each puny  
thing,

And mocked mere blatant mouthing of a  
mime !

But manhood brave and kindly and sincere,  
And tender womanhood a meek sweet flower,  
He drew from 'neath the trampling feet of  
these,

Proclaiming very ministers of Heaven  
In a corrupted world . . . Kind humorist  
Opening oft a healthful mellow laugh  
Of laughter for the innocent and young !

Now at this time, the wintry Christmas  
time,

Must he leave void his wonted place with us ?  
Weep !—not unmindful of the birth of Love !

CHRISTMAS 1863.

## ON THE MOUNTAIN

LINGER a moment, for a moment only,  
     Here on the height !  
 Ere our sad feet must feel yon shadows  
     lonely  
     Sinking to night.  
 In sooth I know it was but yesterday  
     You heard me chide  
 Your calm unhasting progress in the way,  
     O life, my guide !  
 An hour ago how fondly I aspired  
     To crown the crest  
 Of manly years where beautiful untired  
     Our elders rest—  
 Nay seem to rest, for slowly they decline  
     And leave the brow :  
 Region of glamour at the last made mine !  
     Where are they now ?  
 I view them, I behold them, winding low :  
     Here it is day,  
 And all along the mountain from below ;  
     But there away  
 Falls their dim going ever in the shade :  
     Only awhile  
 Linger, behold with morning in the glade  
     My home sweet smile  
 Warm in the vines ! fair home, a hopeful child  
     I sped from you,  
 And since, how many a tearful barren wild  
     Too well I know !  
 Yet smooth and rugged, beautiful and foul,  
     Look fair from here,  
 Softened in mellowing memories of the soul  
     Made pure from fear.  
 I never dreamed of passing from the splendour,  
     Crowned once withal,  
 Who chid thy slowness when my years were tender,  
     Yet now I fall  
 Prone at thy feet, O friend mysterious !  
     Praying to rest :  
 Even if I knew them yonder waiting us,  
     Fair faces pressed  
 Of human lovers whom I longed to rouse,  
     Fold to my breast ;

Yea if I knew yon music in the glooming  
     Of future years  
 Were surely welcome of sweet souls illuming  
     With light of tears  
 My feet confused, with grateful tears my  
     feet ;  
     Yea if I knew,  
 Still would I trammel all thy steps too fleet,  
     Feeling they flew.  
 For even if yonder may be human glory,  
     Acclaims that roll,  
 Here, even here, there beams upon my story  
     An aureole,  
 A heavenly purple, auroral light of youth  
     Reblossing never—  
 But there at most a sombre fire in sooth  
     Fading for ever !  
 What though for me may mellow sustenance  
     Of fruits hang low,  
 Crimson or golden in the way's advance,  
     Amber may flow,  
 Autumn may smoulder ripe and gorgeous  
     In clouds and leaves ;  
 Fresh morning never as the pilgrim goes  
     From now relieves ;  
 But all in shadowland he wavereth  
     Out of the sun,  
 Till in yon gloom of lowland stilly Death,  
     Dull-eyed and dun,  
 Feels at his feet for feeding with his breath  
     Oblivion !  
 Nay I repine not since upon the air,  
     Even while I go,  
 Clear floats a treble of young children fair  
     Who climb below.  
 Nay, I repine not, for I lift mine eyes  
     To heights afar  
 Tranquil abiding lovely in the skies,  
     Homes of the star.  
 Yea, in a vision I can see them moving,  
     Children of God,  
 Dear human creatures clear from our re-  
     proving,  
     Nigh His abode.  
 Though fleeting our frail syllable of story,  
     God will rehearse  
 Fresh like the sea, grown never old and hoary,  
     His universe !

## GARIBALDI: AN ODE

*ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν*

## I

SHOUT ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

A long descended monarch proud,  
 With right divine to hold men bowed ?  
 Methinks we've seen such gods before,  
 And heard imbruted myriads roar  
 Acclaim to one with murdering sword  
 A lust of power hath foully gored,  
 Or marked some thin official cheer  
 Mid passers lowering through their fear—  
 Not such a king of men is here !

## II

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

No military pageant flares,  
 Nor cannon booms, nor trumpet blares,  
 But only mighty London pours  
 Her fire of life that chafes and roars,  
 Licks up the roofs with giant glee  
 And bursts at every window free !  
 Kerchiefs of women, banners wave,  
 As this king's mission were to save  
 Not kill ; so run their mottoes brave !

## III

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

The people crowd his chariot way,  
 To grasp his hand they surge and sway ;  
 From each full heart the welcome cries,  
 Each soul leaps forth from beaming eyes ;  
 What hero so can stir us all ?  
 This man at least hath saved from thrall  
 Our England ! Nay, behold the man,  
 Yon lionlike Italian,  
 Whose calm pure smile our welcomes fan !

## IV

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

A king indeed of spirits this,  
 More like the kings in yonder bliss

Beyond the blue, like those we trust  
 Men shall own kings when we are dust,  
 In some far golden age of time,  
 When the old gods lie trailed in slime ;  
 We labouring up the darkened stream  
 Behold in yonder orient gleam  
 One sail, a guide to morning's beam !

## V

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

Behold ! this nature's flint and sand  
 Were fused in fire by Love's command  
 All to one diamond, for so  
 He and Mazzini seem to glow :  
 Such loving men, monarchs alone  
 Of alien spirits and their own :  
 Behold him from the tyrant rive  
 A crown, yet only take to give !  
 'Tis royal Love's prerogative.

## VI

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

Our baubles, crowns and titles, gold,  
 Seem to the man of such a mould  
 As the wild Indian's glory does,  
 The war-paint and the scalp, to us :  
 His glory lies in doing good,  
 His crown men's hearts, each one imbued  
 With that same sense of one for all,  
 He compasseth them grand withal,  
 So would he have men feel his thrall !

## VII

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

Not you who, if the incarnate God  
 Came now, would fix with sapient nod  
 Your microscopic intellect,  
 And mince, " A pimple we detect ;"  
 Since if you rushed to clasp his feet  
 Like the rude mob so indiscreet,  
 Rich fumes your nostrils full inhale  
 From your sweet selves might chance to fail,  
 The rush would make them hindward trail !

## VIII

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

Where nobles vie to honour him  
Whom God made noblest man of them,  
So honouring our lordly class,  
I hear two loungers as they pass,  
Some dandy man and woman, sneer  
"Turn not your back, the king is here !"  
If he had kept the crown he took,  
How meek that toy would make them look !  
Mere naked worth they cannot brook.

## IX

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

Hoar institutions mouldering stand  
Of yore for service wisely planned.  
Persian nor Greek nor Arab spilt  
Stupendous fanes by Pharaoh built ;  
Only when earthquake shook the crust  
Bowed those "eternal" piles in dust :  
Through desert courts the jackal bays,  
The moon o'er unknown symbol strays ;  
So now the people new power essays.

## X

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

Old thrones and creeds begin to sway  
As the young giant feels for day.  
King Philistines have bound his wrist,  
Delilah Superstition kissed  
His mouth as in her lap he slept,  
But crave for light and air hath crept  
About his smothered lethargy ;  
He stirs, he stretches, fetters fly :  
Free stalks he, pignies cowering by !

## XI

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

Rome bleeding, panting, moment-free  
Turned not in vain wild eyes to thee—  
Lo ! she with Venice turns them yet !  
Even now perchance thou mightst have set

Another flaming diadem

On him thy countrymen esteem

Had not his soldiers shot thee down

In act from strife to hold thine own—

Gap gemless in that monarch's crown.

## XII

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

King even at Aspromonte, hail !  
We see thee wounded, worn and pale,  
With saddened soul yet tranquil eye  
Gaze where rich-vestured mountains lie  
Clear-glassed in Spezzia's lakelike sea,  
Thy bonds deep shame to Italy :  
On prophet vision thy spirit throve—  
A world calm as yon seas through love—  
Drowned Shelley's spirit here must move !

## XIII

We see thee in thine island home,  
Caprera ringed with whispering foam,  
Set in Mediterranean blue ;  
Thy goats i' the wild thyme browsing chew ;  
Thy thoughts go wandering dreamily  
Round all the strange sad past and nigh  
Yon lowland cursed where faint from day  
Thy noble Anita sank for aye :  
Yet there unborn great souls shall pray !

## XIV

Shout ! a king of men is here !

Hurrah !

Now down the traffic-teeming river  
A course of molted gold doth quiver  
'Neath Westminster's vast-moulded arch,  
While o'er it moves thy triumph march.  
In far nooks formless shadows cower,  
In evening chrysolite yon tower  
Mounts o'er the stately palace-pile  
Where a free people calm laws compile—  
We lack thy selflessness sublime,  
Yet tremble, tyrants crowned with crime !  
Our hearts with those who strain to climb :  
Hail ! herald of the dawning time !  
Hail ! the new world's exuberant prime !

## PALMYRA

LISTLESS and weary silently we crouch  
Under the sun's intolerable face,  
For ever forward heaving dreamily,  
Each on his camel with a noiseless foot,  
Swift, sure, and silent like the feet of Time,  
And nose protruding level on the air :  
Our brilliant-hued and flowing-vested guards  
Drowsily bowing to the camel-stride,  
Our shadows blotted sharp upon the sand,  
And ne'er a sound but in the barrel slung,  
A gurgling as of wells among the palms !

Anon the imperial tyrant unaware  
Declines from empire of the blinding skies.  
Some tall mysterious tomb-towers that seemed  
To mock us with the promise of their shade  
Through the long day now stand upon their  
heights

Ghostlike and near, until as in a dream  
We pass the portals of them, and we solve  
That ashen-grey enigma of the hills.  
Then bursts upon our breathless souls a sight  
Such as they say shall opening overwhelm  
The waking vision of the sons of God,  
Emergent from the pilgrimage of life.

Behold ! amid the illimitable waste  
Abides a city glorious with gold  
Of arch triumphal, leaguelong colonnade,  
Palace and fane with pediment and frieze,  
While dominating, mighty like a mountain,  
Mounts from their midst the Temple of the  
Sun,

Eternal based upon stupendous blocks  
Poised there by genii, slaves of Solomon.  
See yonder, palms—ah ! grateful gush of  
green,  
And cool mild flash of water soothing eyes  
Cowering from such severity of light !

Ere full the vision enraptured we behold,  
Lo ! we are sweeping swiftly to the plain  
Nigh the enchanted city. Do I wake,  
Or weave some glowing fabric in a dream ?  
I only know the weariness hath passed,

With all oppression on the fevered frame,  
All thirst and hunger : I could deem me  
borne

Out of myself, and mingled with the world !  
Why do I weep ? we wander in and out  
Fair lucent springing arches cored with fire,  
By many a votive column, over fret  
Fantastic fine of broken tracery,  
Loves, fruit, and flowers glowing underfoot.  
A silvery serpent-coil is in the eyes  
Of yon stone fragment of a hero's head !  
Sealike about me sets the wilderness  
To realms untravelled ; saving where we  
came ;

For there the mountains purple rich with eve,  
While many a pillar sunders them with gold,  
A mouldering castle of the Saracens  
Crowning them, dark athwart the heavenly  
fire.

Anon among the ruins calls the wind  
Whirling the desert in wild revelry,  
Crumbled beneath fierce suns of centuries  
To sand, and sifted of the searching blast,  
Mounding it pale about the ways and walls  
Where once Zenobia, queen of all the East,  
Flushed and elate with empire and with youth  
Drove in her chariot, girt with flaming swords  
And dark adoring faces of her lovers,  
Flashing another morning from her eyes,  
Borne as on wings of music royally !  
How long before she looked from yonder  
height

Her mournful last upon the shattered glory  
Of her sweet kingdom with a clouded eye,  
Or proudly turned, a captive yet a queen,  
Away for ever with Aurelian ?  
Now the fair city is a skeleton  
Whose shell but serves to tessellate blue air.  
Now the fair ways once resonant with life,  
Vibrant with pulses of world-history,  
Feel only stealthy feet of the lean wolf  
Or prowling fox ; save where our Bedawy  
Rush galloping with wild barbaric yell  
Poising the quivered lance in mimic charge,  
Wheeling and spurning dust, mayhap of men  
To cloud about them—spirits of the blast !  
Incarnate winds as lawless and as wild !

Dim limbless Chaos here with Anarchy  
 And Desolation holds high carnival,  
 Welters carousing, laughing loud and long  
 In maniac triumph of reconquering  
 His ancient lair where once the God of life  
 Brooded to quicken formless elements  
 Into a throbbing heart of all mankind !

Dread exultation of primeval Powers  
 In all-exhaustless fountain of your youth,  
 Dread celebration of your victory !  
 And your eternal birthday, in the place  
 Where ye abode before King Solomon,  
 And darkling played about the feet of God !  
 Where ye abide now after the brief hour  
 That shone with human empire, now the worm  
 Hath fouled sweet tresses of the queen of men,  
 And loathly things have littered in her breast !  
 In your grand triumph, awful yet sublime,  
 I bear a part, exulting deep with you,  
 Albeit I weep, remembering what we are !  
 And yet I know these lives of ours not lost,  
 Exhaling to enhance the life of God,  
 Life of all ages freshening evermore ! . . .

For us, dear friend with whom I wandered  
 there,

For us the lovely ruin had a voice,  
 A human message : after then we ranged  
 Apart, afar ; our feeling and our thought  
 Have known a change ; still you may call to  
 mind

That argent moon upfloating large and pure  
 In dark blue night above the solemn temple  
 And hush of palm and water ; how we lay  
 Under the open wakeful very long,  
 So strange and so entrancing all the night !  
 Ah ! soon, how soon, we surely shall decline,  
 Fade to the indistinguishable whole.  
 But when the moon shall silver soft our sleep,  
 Still fair Palmyra beautiful in death  
 Shall thrill with her weird silence like a  
 spirit

Souls yet unborn to wistful questioning ;  
 They too like fearful childrer. shall implore  
 And call, nor ever they, nor any one,  
 Shall hear an answer floating from the void !

1868.

THE RED FLAG  
AND OTHER POEMS

1872



## THE RED FLAG

THERE is peace in London !  
Not here, as yonder, men blaspheming loud,  
Begrimed with slaughter, cruelly aflame,  
Drag some dishevelled woman through the crowd

To shoot her with a blundering blind aim :  
She with her hopeless hunted face of fear  
Grovvelling falls, and to her dying ear  
Pierce her foul fellows with inhuman jeer.  
There, all along the fair arcaded street  
Where they are murdering, in sacks lie thrown  
Dead men and women ; where the dainty feet

Were wont to loiter ; there the brilliants shown

Lured eyes that vied in lustre with their own.  
But these are ghastly, whence the warm life-flood

Oozing hath stained the flags with human blood !

Alas ! among these women whom with spasm  
Of righteous indignation men have slain,  
Each fired with spirituous enthusiasm,  
Order's disorderly Prætorian,

Among these Frenchwomen whom Frenchmen slew

I well believe there may be more than few  
Mothers and wives, who have sublimely stood  
Waiting benumbed in snow for scanty food  
Through that long winter siege un murmuring,  
Wearying away with want ; one little thing  
'Neath Mont-Parnasse from hunger, and another

Cold clinging to the worn skirt of a mother,  
Shrinking so close from Death, who tears it off,

And laughs "One vermin more!" with brutal scoff.

Is there a mob-contemning silk aristocrat,  
Who spits on man like Death the Democrat ?

Alas ! alas ! it was a baleful hour  
When the great goddess Order hounded slaves  
Fair France's patriot daughters to deflower,  
And spurn them into ignominious graves,  
Festering under smooth Parisian flags,  
That there in peace her delicate Agags  
Might mince once more with high-born courtesans

O'er the dead people, weaving pleasant plans,  
And praising her, their cannibal god, the Mother,

Who loves one human child to fatten upon another.

Alas ! alas ! it was a baleful hour  
When Frenchmen to the shrines of this grey Power

Dragged hero-soulèd sisters by the hair,  
Slaking grim Order's thirst for vengeance there,

Revengeing horribly that old despair  
Wherewith the long-cowed, lashed, mad people flew

At Tyranny's withered throat to bite it through.

Some of these women, when imperial France  
Collapsed confused before the foe's advance,  
With famine-feeble hand sustained her glory,  
Passing it flawless on to History ;

Bowed with the awful burden, meekly giving  
Their own, their very little children's living  
For France's honour, for the Country's Cause,

None but these nobler victims the red jaws  
Of Order, that great goddess whom the world  
And this great city Paris worshippeth,

Greedily yawn to swallow ; these are hurled  
With blind fiend-fury to a dishonoured death :  
Men who were fain to shrink before the foeman

Can hustle at least and mangle their own women !

Thus in the world's gay capital to-day  
Alva looks from the face of Galifet.  
Arm in arm with the World, her old ally,  
See how the Church creeps forth to see them  
die !

Emaciated here may she renew  
Her sleek youth in a fresh Bartholomew.  
She, while she sips warm blood from her full  
chalice,

Points with a supernatural smile of malice  
Where feudal Bismarck and his master wait  
To thrust yon fugitives upon their fate ;  
Back to the flames that hurtle all abroad,  
Back on the point of an insatiate sword :  
She lifts to heaven her cruel falsetto voice ;  
But 'tis the damned who hear it and rejoice,  
Shrieking responsive to her jubilee,  
" Amen ! so perish Man who will be free !"  
Priests, women, soldiers, children, all afire ;  
Paris around them roars a funeral pyre,  
Screaming, blaspheming ; are the corpses  
dumb ?

Verily here is Pandemonium !

So fills itself another crimson page  
Of human story ; so from age to age  
Men reap the fruit of hate and wrath and  
Death

From the red seed they sowed, and with mad  
breath

Cherished for harvest: still they strew the same,  
Mutual rancour, fear, and scorn, and shame ;  
And still it breaks to fury and to flame.

Liberty watereth with many a tear  
The growth maturing ; still she hopes to rear  
Her own frail flower, but ever hides her eyes  
When she beholds the infernal blade arise—  
Ever a gory growth, a venomous thing,  
Now named Mob-rule, now Slavery to a King.

There is peace in London.  
And in this peace I lately stood before  
A mean brick housefront at a dingy door  
In a foul street : the place was very near  
Where wealthy folk inhabit half the year.  
One at an ale-house lounging reeled low-  
browed,  
Whose face no fine humanities avowed,

A Pariah, whose human rights ignored,  
We hold created for the hangman's cord ;  
A social outcast none have sought to tame,  
Who hath an old inheritance—his shame.  
Then at the base of narrow stairs arriving,  
I raised my voice to ask if one were living  
Here, a poor ailing woman whom I sought ;  
Whereupon some sharp man's voice made retort  
Through a bleared twilight : " Well, she's  
*dying here.*"

Oppressive weighed the reeking atmosphere,  
And though the summer sun shone out above,  
I for a time peered vainly while I strove  
Aught to distinguish in the squalid gloom ;  
Yet pushing some black door I found the  
room.

It was a bare room, void of garniture,  
Where first the window did mine eyes allure,  
Whose broken panes the grime of years defiles :  
Never it feels pure air, nor how God smiles  
In heaven ; the haggard eye of this dim den,  
Of this foul prison for low-born Englishmen,  
Looks on a court of miry walls well filled  
With sherds and loathly refuse reckless spilled.  
Yet by the window sits a ragged dwarf,  
With wolfish, pinched pale features, and a  
cough :

His nimble, skeleton, fallow fingers ply  
At their incessant toil ; a vessel nigh  
Smokes with some viscous glue, belike shellac,  
Gear of his craft ; his labour-hunched back  
Stoops over ; as he straightens it he looks  
With eyes half fierce, half dull amid the shocks  
Of matted hair grown prematurely grey :  
A man yet young—but slaving day by day,  
With sorrow and scanty nourishment, can slay  
Can age man early—lo ! a wizened elf,  
A weird small shadow of the man himself,  
Creeps to the father's side, and takes the toy  
He has been fingering : ah ! favoured boy,  
A stone's throw distant, on thy birthday joy  
Shall fly from here to thee ! no wistful eye  
Cast thou, poor starveling—lay it down to dry !  
" Where is she ?" I demanded : he was dumb,  
And rose as though he heard me not ; for  
numb

He surely was with long monotonous sorrow,  
That knows no hope of any fair to-morrow.

A tame mechanical, abortive toil  
 Can all the rainbow from a life despoil  
 And leave it grey, like pining flowers that lose,  
 Shut from sweet sunlight, all their native hues.  
 So sullenly the man resumed his labour :  
 But now one pointed—some poor female  
 neighbour—

To something cowering in withered weeds :  
 Is it a Woman's withered face that feeds  
 On what degraded light may wander through  
 Her Sudra vault from our palatial Blue?  
 She lies upon some rags upheaped and coarse  
 (Her very bed they lately pawned perforce) :  
 She lies as though unbreathing, still as stone,  
 Save when at intervals she makes low moan.  
 "What ails her?" to the neighbour soft I said :  
 "She will not ail long ; she will soon be dead,"  
 The other whispered ; "she is very ill :  
 'Tis marvel what the man can earn may still  
 Keep her alive ; her ailing state required  
 She should be nourished well, nor overtired,  
 The doctor told her : why, she used to stitch  
 From dawn to night : you see it is the rich  
 Who can take rest with ample food, not we.  
 If ever one were *starved*, sir, it is she.  
 I often shared my little with them—yet  
 Can ill afford my children to forget.  
 Parish allows them somewhat : surely ; yes,  
 But see the children, and his feebleness !"   
 Four growing children with the parents here  
 Dwell, sleep, in one close room from year to  
 year.

Three elder ones are helping the pale sire  
 At his life-drudgery—the fourth admire !  
 It clings, an infant, to the neighbour's dress,  
 Blooming and hale : the Harpy of Distress  
 Hesitates to pollute so pure a child.  
 Once, when the mother looked that way, she  
 smiled  
 Almost, I fancied, yet her infant shrank  
 Now from herself: how should it know she sank  
 More swiftly in drear unremembered death,  
 Because she gave it what sustained her breath?

This, and the craftsman's tiny glow of fire,  
 And one poor flower, help one to respire,  
 Sustain the heart's-breath in this woful air  
 Of hopeless human suffering : a fair

Fragile geranium leans forth to breathe  
 There at the window ; half the mould beneath  
 Droops from the broken potsherd, and the  
 fine

Fibres denuded like the blossoms pine.  
 The wife's dim dying face is toward the  
 flower,  
 And toward her husband ceasing ne'er to  
 cower

Over his toil ; each fairer sight to her,  
 Whose was the wand of trust that may not err,  
 Was heaven's window : yea, the "home" so  
 drear,

With these crushed lives, looked only not so  
 clear

Crystalline God Himself hath troubled so,  
 For ends adorable she may not know.  
 But ah ! the pain, her weakness, the confusion  
 Born of her weakness, wrought in fell collu-  
 sion

With woe of these her kindred to conceal  
 Often those gleams unearthly that reveal  
 God dwells with her in very visible glory,  
 Her soul a holier shrine than all cathedrals  
 hoary !

Nay, but this woman cowering in the gloom,  
 Dark, speechless, ghastly, starving, haunts  
 the room

With horror—lowest sunken in the fate  
 That slowly whelms her kindred desolate !  
 She lurks a silent corpse, and yet alive :  
 About her all her fainting family strive  
 With bony fingers tightening their hold ;  
 While near them lords and ladies drain the  
 gold

That sparkles with exhilarating pleasure,  
 Fair, in fine raiment, wantoning at leisure.  
 To starve in London ! on the stones where  
 wealth

Indifferent saunters, dull with food and  
 health !

Surely this infant healthful for an hour,  
 Surely the pining, pale geranium flower,  
 The puny glow that will anon expire,  
 Are but as little children's hands that tire  
 In piteous attempt to move some rock  
 That hath erased a household in the shock,

Wherewith the haughty Mountain-spirit  
scorning  
Hurled it from icy palaces of Morning !  
So these can move not the dull Fate that rests  
Like tons of stone upon crushed human  
breasts.

And yet from her, the woman dying there,  
Who lately seemed to radiate despair  
And darkness in the melancholy room,  
Breaks forth a glory softening the doom,  
Tinging this horrible embroilment even  
With iridescent loveliness from heaven.  
The light of Faith ! a marvellous holy light  
Breaking from simple souls that sink in  
night—

Power bursting barriers of woe and wrong,  
Prisons wherein the mighty, cruel and strong,  
In proud prosperity have pent the weak,  
Revealing the Deliverer they seek,  
To blind faint lives that writhe beneath the  
curse

Opening fair vistas of the universe !  
While helpless under men's hard feet they  
groan,

A ray reveals the Father on His throne :  
The oppressor trampling on His poor may  
still

Shout, "Who shall stay me when I work  
my will?"

A voice peals through the echoing worlds :  
"I will!"

And let them hearken, or let them forbear,  
The poor have heard Him, and the Lord is  
there !

But woe for him who toils without a hope !  
He in base mire of loathed life will grope,  
With midnight's cold unconstellated cope  
Weighing him graveward : heed how ye  
despoil

A life, no earthly welfare's kindly soil  
Nourishes, of a spiritual air,  
Given to sustain a spirit leafing there.  
Hold ere ye quench a wavering hope that can  
Save from despair a miserable man !

Foes of old superstition ! Do ye *know*  
That God will never right the wrongs of woe ;

That there is ne'er a Lord of life and death,  
Who giving, reassumeth every breath?  
What God hath bidden you shout to them  
that weep,

"God is a fable, death an endless sleep ;  
Good news for thee who writhest in the curse !  
Thine earthly cage is all the universe."  
Ye spurn our worn solutions : but may ye  
Solve, by denying, all the mystery ?  
Yourselves will help yourselves : alas ! we fall.  
Where is our help if human help be all ?

And these were happy : they loved one  
another :

Now by the living corse of her the mother,  
Of her the wife yet young, he sits and works,  
And looks askance where in the shadow lurks  
A ghastly Horror creeping, though he toil  
To ban it from the children, innocent spoil,  
So sweet to our Destroyer, whose low laugh  
Mocks man, as wind mocks the lightheaded  
chaff !

Are not this London's million ordured courts  
Verily curst ineffable resorts  
Of ghouls more horrible than Easterns feign ?  
Do ye not note them yonder at the pane  
Mopping and mowing, spectres foul yet dim  
In subtle blue miasma mists that swim,  
There at the dingy pane, with dull dead eyes,  
Faces wormfretted, lank, with livid dyes,  
And loathly trunk slow revelling in slime  
Under the window—brood of folly and crime !  
Ye fearful Hydras, Cholera and Fever,  
Batten on starving huddled slaves for ever !

Yet Love Divine who yearns to them that  
weep,  
Finding man's Torturers off guard, sent sleep ;  
Stole to the wornout soul in guise of dream,  
And soothed her with a sweet celestial gleam.  
One night he dreamed of his lost childhood's  
mirth :

Love culled a leaf from off a happier earth.  
A boy and girl beside a cool-toned brook  
Bathe their feet laughing, bending oft to look,  
Through delicate glumes of grasses and some  
sedge

That grows with willowherb upon the edge,

Where ruffled cresses with the sliding stream  
 Flow along fresh below the watery gleam.  
 Near stoops a hollow trunk wherein they  
   played  
 At being men and women—unafraid !  
 Singing birds in the leaves are not more glad  
 Than these two rustic children poorly clad,  
 Glowing with health, from some fair cottage  
   nigh.  
 The russet girl is beautiful, her eye  
 More blue than any fleeting butterfly.  
 Can it be he, the merry little boy?  
 And that his sister in her innocent joy?

She grew a maiden, very fair, but frail :  
 Some rich man wronged her—now what  
   sounds assail  
 A waking ear?—a woman trolls a hoarse  
 Loose ditty : her young lineaments are coarse  
 With harlot hues ; she reels from yonder door  
 Flaring with harsh light out into the pour  
 On slimy pavements : how the gaudy dress  
 Clings to her slender, fevered feebleness !  
 She and her brother have been severed long ;  
 And so she passes with her ghastly song  
 Unknowing, while he sees her undefiled :  
 Love shows her to him as a little child.

Yet very nigh there often pace the street  
 Casual farers with indifferent feet :  
 And when the craftsman goes to breathe  
   awhile  
 Upon the stair, he sees the cheery smile,  
 Hears happy snatches of a careless talk  
 From comfortable strangers in their walk. . . .

. . . Now 'tis a Dean, who as he  
   ambles by  
 Raises a question of church-millinery ;  
 Or in allusion to the squalid street  
 Observes that, howsoever God may mete  
 The lot of each, all should be docile, which  
 One may name "Gospel according to the  
   rich."  
 If there were no starvation for the mean,  
 Supplies might fail us for a portly Dean.  
 Then this fine burst of pulpit eloquence  
 A threadbare Curate heard in rapt suspense :

" This glorious old edifice of State,  
 Though finding-fault, black, croaking birds  
   may prate  
 Around it"—(did the parson mean the *rooks*,  
 Rebels, or heretics, or naughty books ?)—  
 " Is founded on the broad backs of the people ;  
 Our middle-class the buttressed wall ; the  
   steeple,  
 Or dome, our king and old nobility ;  
 The Church, yon golden cross that meets the  
   sky !"  
 He should have travelled lower than the  
   stones,  
 Even to the charnel-vault of dead men's  
   bones !  
 Your grand colossal edifice to-day  
 Rests on a yawning darkness and decay ;  
 Beware ! for it is ready to vanish away !  
 Yea, is it founded on the people's backs ?  
 Behold ! how as ye walk the sanguine tracks  
 Ye leave are slippery with human gore,  
 The life, the health, the souls of men your  
   floor.  
 Glance not below ; yield to the organ's pealing ;  
 Explore the lonely grandeurs of the ceiling !  
 Ah ! but your tyrannous structure is atremble—  
 I who behold it dare no more dissemble :  
 God breathes upon it with the breath of doom :  
 Phantoms of empire summon from the tomb !  
 Dominant o'er us glares the cross of gold,  
 And haughty hierarchies manifold  
 Brandish the symbol for a flaming sword,  
 Kneel to the cross, and crucify the Lord !  
 Friend of the lowly, fainting on the wood,  
 Behold thy poor upon a golden rod !

. . . The lonely toiler, gasping for some air,  
 Listens in shadowy poison of the stair,  
 Listens, a wounded beast within his lair. . . .  
 . . . And there is *Peace* in London !

Now trips a dame who lifts her skirt for fear  
 Of many a foul contamination here,  
 Revealing delicate ankles to the friend,  
 Who (to assist) his manly arm may lend.  
 " Think what a desperate misery may slink  
 In these low neighbourhoods from whence  
   we shrink ?"

In silver tones she whispers : " Look ! there  
prowl

Two terrible ragged ruffians with a scowl."

" Near our town-houses ! who could fancy it ? "

Drawls out the dandy with more birth than wit.

She, with a slight quick shiver, half a sigh :

" One's heart aches even to *dream* such

poverty ! "

( It jarred her nervous sensibility. )

" And yet, as Mister Glozeman said in church,

To make the vessel of the State to lurch,

To shake our ancient Order is the worst

Crime : it deserves the torture, ' tis accurst

Of God and man—he meant the Communist

Canaille in Paris. " Then the dandy hissed

With panic fury, " Shoot the draff by millions !

So may our scum here learn to make re-

bellions ! "

To clear some stray defilement from her dress,

Bending she slightly on his arm may press ;

Then, as if breeding were a little at fault

In that last ardour of her friend's assault

Even on hereditary foes, the mob,

On swarms unclean, who sweat and starve

and rob,

She waved aside the subject she had lent

Her glance in passing, drawling as she went,

" They say the poor are so improvident ! "

Half absently she spoke, to weightier themes

Turning anon—to cunning, lordly schemes

For stifling noxious popular low measures :

Then of refined aristocratic pleasures

They babbled—Hurlingham—the ducal ball—

Of a monstrous nobleman turned Radical,

Of latest fashions out, a novel tie,

Or the last sweet thing in adultery.

The lonely toiler, gasping for some air,

Listens in shadowy poison of the stair,

Listens, a hunted beast within his lair. . . .

. . . And there is *Peace* in London !

It happened once two gentlemen were  
stayed

Here, waiting some companion delayed.

Sauntering to and fro they smoking walked,

Or leant against the house-wall while they

talked.

One was an oldish man ; the other, he  
Spake as one claiming great authority.

His dust-hued head was growing grey in  
part—

From tardy fellow-feeling with his heart.

" Not to admire " the only art he knew

To keep him comfortable as he grew.

What might have moved the vulgar to dis-  
traction

Moved him to limp distaste or satisfaction.

He viewed with very philosophic calm

All human ills—that did himself no harm.

But he had taken honours at his college,

And deemed himself a microcosm of know-  
ledge.

Outside he looked a thicket of stiff bristles ;

Inside he looked a jungle of prickly thistles,

Which, though from them no figs for men be  
reared,

Seem dainties to the stubborn race long-eared.

A sort of sour old maid the man was born ;

He could secrete but weak incontinent scorn ;

Sterile to foster, organise, produce—

Aught but sophistic pleas for some abuse.

Moreover, one might notice with surprise

The sort of things that made his gorge to rise ;

Always the wrong thing—for his heart would  
bleed

If generous enterprise or kindly deed

Not failed, but seemed in danger of succeeding.

This turned him yellow, set his heart ableed-  
ing !

So may base cruelty arouse the rage

In vulgar bosoms : yet methinks a sage

Should be more tolerant in middle-age.

Restless he itches till he settle in blight

On springing hopes with envious little spite ;

Yet nipping buds of generous resolve,

Should one survive his yearning to dissolve,

Become respectable, accomplished thing,

He fulsome fawns on that beslaving.

Every frail human hope that pleads for air,

Wistfully peering generous and fair,

He burns to foul—to squat in mockery there.

He, a boy prig, once laughed at by a woman,

Became the sex's indiscriminate foeman :

He must have had a sister or a mother,

And yet insults, asperses every other.

Politely-cultured loungers at the club  
 Take for Sir Oracle the fluent cub;  
 Anonymous in his periodical  
 Large, vague he looms; who, dullard  
   thoughts of all  
 Dishing up deftly, flatters each fool so,  
 It fondly fancies it may strut as though  
 Itself were some potential Rochefoucauld.  
 He could be lively only when he hated:  
 Pungent aromas all evaporated,  
 When he with heavy hand, with heavier face,  
 Apotheosised English commonplace;  
 A Rubens' cherub cumberously squat,  
 Labouring to upheave some royal fat  
 Skyward—the whole falls marvellously flat!  
 With ponderous platitude his smart review  
 Lumbers along when it proclaims the true  
 Plethoric gospel of the well-to-do.  
 Man of a *petite culture*, whose college culture  
 Is but a whited sepulchre sepulture  
 Of living manhood—his in sooth was small:  
 Only a castrate creature's after all.

His elder comrade, green as a vegetable,  
 Lives much as did the dogs in sacred fable;  
 He picks up crumbs from off a rich man's  
   table.

With tact he courts the upper ten for dinners,  
 No friend of publicans and bourgeois sinners.  
 While footmen hand you many a dainty meat,  
 And butlers pour you out some choice Lafitte,  
 He undertakes the dinner-wit to furnish;  
 Which is a trifle flyblown, wants a burnish.  
 The saltcellar with warranted Attic grains  
 Serves for so many boards, the flavour wanes.  
 Less delicately now he spins the slander,  
 For toil wears even a fashionable pander.  
 Still when he speaks unwholesome simpers fly  
 Around the high  
 Distinguished circle of mahogany.  
 Egyptians played with monkeys when they  
   dined;

Our kings kept jesters of a motley kind;  
*We* fit our cap and bells on "men of mind."

From condescension to humanity  
 (A piece of luck for Christianity),  
 These men their ægis of sublime protection  
 Spread over Jesus and the Resurrection.

They with a crooked tongue in hollow cheek  
 Commend His Gospel to the poor and weak.  
 These, who have measured God with half an  
   eye,

Damn with faint praise the blessed Trinity.  
 Faith relegated to the lower orders,  
 A panacea for popular disorders,  
 A pap for babes and women, once upheaved  
 Mountains and hurled them headlong, once  
   achieved

The impossible, taught saviours on the cross  
 And in the fire to triumph in their loss;  
 A flame by night, an awful cloud by day,  
 Guided Mankind on their eternal way.

Now it fulfils a somewhat humbler function:  
 From it sleek priests distil the pulpit unction:  
 While clever Barnums, cleverer and stronger  
 Than all old heroes, needing faith no longer,  
 Reduce our gods to dolls wherewith a show-  
   man

Hoodwinks the rabble, and the babes and  
   women.

Still the old creed is a propriety,  
 An heirloom, a respectability;  
 One can conceive it true; be civil to it;  
 Were you uncivil you might come to rue it.  
 So at a possible future judgment you  
 May tell the Lord, you said it *might* be true:  
 Yea, should it menace—you have thought of  
   that—

And left yourself with ample room to rat.  
 Oh! what an irony of secret fate!  
 Oh! what declension from a royal state!  
 That Faith, who once God's favourite angel  
   flew,

Now drudges for a Saturnine review.  
 Yet though they give two fingers to the Saviour  
 Best clothes on Sunday and demure behaviour,  
 Men of the world on every working day  
 Put the old creed with childish things away.  
 Measure the infinite God on pain of hell;  
 But do not heed Him when you buy or sell.  
 Call Jesus Lord decorously on Sunday,  
 But treat Him as a genial fool on Monday.  
 Lift up your pious eyes at Darwin's creed;  
 Yet try to prove him right about your breed,  
 Dear fellow-Christians! who live as though  
 Not even now you'd struggled from below.

For beasts of prey with all their savage strife  
 Are still the cherished models of your life.  
 Ye war with all your fellows for existence,  
 And when you've thrown them, still with  
   fierce insistence,  
 Grind them beneath you, crush them all to  
   death,  
 That you may breathe a more luxurious breath.  
 Hail! weaponed man of grand expanding  
   brain,  
 Most formidable beast of all that stain  
 Our mother earth with fratricidal blood!  
 Tigers but raven hungry for their food;  
 But thou, to fling one shining bauble more  
 In coffers bursting with thy gold before,  
 Starvest the babes and women at thy door!

How these two friends congenial conversed  
 Here, as the listener heard it, is rehearsed,  
 As from his slightly varied point of view  
 It might have sounded to the speakers too.  
 "Shopkeeping England trades without ob-  
   struction;

Early and late we're toiling at production.  
 If many starve to swell our opulence,  
 That's an arrangement due to providence.  
 Who prates of wealth's more equal distri-  
   bution,

Or generous masters, means the revolution.  
 Gravity's one law; this another; profit  
 Can never bear a farthing taken off it.  
 Perish the human race to verify  
 Our pet Political Economy!

Men start not fair; one weighted from the first  
 Must live and die, as he was born, accurst.  
 Yet who in social questions may go deeper  
 Than he that asked, 'Am I my brother's  
   keeper?'

Though the well-taught indulges every whim,  
 A boor should know 'tis criminal in him.  
 Sharp lucky grandsires earned our life of play;  
 The poor must pare their children's crumbs  
   away,

For storing up against an evil day.

"How frail is human nature! how will  
   pity  
 Confuse a fool's heart in a crowded city!

He would remove the squalor and distress,  
 Nay, makes a virtue of his feebleness—  
 Removing makes it more instead of less.  
 Let us with *one* vain luxury dispense,  
 The luxury of our benevolence.  
 We feel a fatuous longing to relieve  
 The culpable incapables who grieve:  
 (They're either drunk or stupid, all the cant  
 Can't alter facts, else why are they in want?)  
 Track home the fatuous longing at your  
   leisure,  
 You'll find (see Mill) 'tis only selfish pleasure  
 This lachrymose desire to benefit  
 Other men aims at, selfish every bit—  
 We virtuous men must learn to bridle it."  
 "It must have cost you many a prayerful  
   tear"

(His waggish friend interpolated here)  
 "Arriving at this holy consummation,  
 Last *economic* test of one's salvation:  
 You from a child have striven early and late  
 With this sad sign of the unregenerate.  
 This corrupt passion more in you than others  
 Blighted sweet innocence; for when your  
   brothers,  
 Or any other baby, sought your toy,  
 You always gave it up with tears—of joy.  
 And then one's mother, she was much to  
   blame:  
 Did she brand generosity with shame?  
 She punished what she termed our 'selfish-  
   ness!'

With her old-world ideas she could not guess,  
 Poor thing! our last discovery in mind,  
 That it is very selfish to be kind.  
 We patronise, she lived, her Christianity—  
 Such saintship is a pestilent insanity;  
 But what if some unshamed iconoclast,  
 Crumbling old fetish-raiments of the past,  
 Rouse from dead cerements the Christ at last?  
 What if men take to following where He  
   leads,  
 Weary of mumbling Athanasian creeds?"

"Self-interest enlightened is our rule:  
 Perish the pauper, and the general fool!—  
 Well for the luckier or shrewder man!  
 For he, by Heaven's especial favour, can

Lodge duller rivals in foul dens like these,  
And feed them with rank garbage if he please.  
Mercy is an exploded superstition;  
Men are but brutes in bloodier competition.

"The State ! what call has that to interfere ?  
Are we not free-born Britons living here ?  
If these like not their scrofulous dens, you  
know,  
They're free to change their quarters ; let  
them go.

Why one of these may struggle uppermost !  
Himself may trample on the writhing host.  
They cursing him, he cursing from above—  
Hatred and Hell are finer things than Love !  
The State forbids that paupers should be slain  
With knives and guns ; but as for stench and  
drain,

And putrefying styes they build so small,  
'Tis suicide to breathe in them at all,  
Breath turns to poison—that's another thing—  
See Malthus on prolific littering !  
Children are luxuries—let these dispense  
With offspring—we ourselves to save expense  
Lop off the babes, and the benevolence.  
Mother ! with murderous unflinching eye  
Gaze on your moaning babe about to die.  
Ring in the rich man's child with jubilation,  
And ring the poor man's out, O happy nation !  
Woman, *your* babe is 'surplus population' !  
Why take such constant thought about the  
body ?

Man shall not live by bread"—"but by his  
toddy,

Margeaux, and Bisque-soup rather," quoth  
the wag.

"Don't chaff, nor let your rapt attention flag,"  
Resumed the Gigadibs, who seemed offended.  
"My arguments will be the sooner ended.  
What was I saying ? well these Radicals  
Pamper the carnal part of pauper pals  
Unduly ; why not teach them to endure  
With fortitude these ills they cannot cure ?  
Throw them a sop of wholesome moral saws—  
(Ah ! pestilent 'education'—*that's* the cause,  
Which *makes* them carp at our existing laws)  
The dogs are always yelping for a bone :  
Fling them to bite a weighty moral stone !

"A man must grab whatever he can get ;  
We human creatures are not angels yet.  
You must not stab, nor strangle, a poor  
neighbour ;

For, if you did, why you would lose *his* labour.  
No ; take advantage of his cramped position  
To mangle him with your cruellest condition.  
Rob soul and body by superior wit  
And fortune ; ignorant hunger will submit.

If he should gash you, that were ugly murder :  
Dribble his life-blood slowly—you're in order.  
Nay, surely 'tis a very venial vice

To buy one's workman at the market price.  
He may impose his terms ; contract is free."

"True," says the other, "yet it seems to me  
Manacled blacks, thrust huddled in the hold  
Of a rotten slaveship, might as well be told  
To bargain with the master of the slaver ;  
They're *slaves* for all your plausible palaver !"

"Nay, in free England every man may rise  
To be Prime Minister before he dies !"  
Quoth the *bon-vivant* with a playful nudge,  
"Bliffl, for next week's copy keep *that*  
fudge !"

. . . The lonely toiler, gasping for some air,  
Listens in shadowy poison of the stair,  
Listens, a wounded beast within his lair, . . .

And there is *Peace* in London !

A Man grew God upon the shadowy cross,  
And taught the world to triumph in love's loss.  
Following Him they took for great and holy,  
Men helped the weak, forbore to insult the  
lowly ;

The mighty made them ministers of woe,  
Because the Lord had served us high and low :  
Now Love and Chivalry lie done to death ;  
Stony-eyed monsters feed on human breath :  
In Christ's forgotten grave we have buried  
weakness,  
Justice, and Mercy, and Righteousness, and  
Meekness !

. . . Then fell the night : there rose a  
mighty roar,  
As though I neared a thunderous ocean-shore :  
Hoary old Ocean feels his bounds no more,  
Rioting over earth a conqueror !

Nay, these are human cries ! In sooth they sound

More wrathful, turbulent, than sea's rebound !  
Fire ruddies all the city ! towered Thames  
Rolls like the Seine, a tide of eddying flames ;  
Vessel, and wharf, and every striding arch  
Glows in the fire-fiend's victorious march.  
Hark ! to the huge bell, whose portentous boom  
Ponderous falling fills the soul with doom.  
Lo ! surging human seas arise and fall  
Around the lurid grandeur of St. Paul.  
Torches illumine their wild convulsive toils,  
Windily flaring ; all around there boils  
Vile human refuse, for the dainty spoils  
They have wrung from others wrangling fierce  
and hoarse.

Ah ! turn away ! with what a hideous force  
They soil our beautiful, both body and soul—  
Famished beasts bursting loose from our  
control.

They pour the life of venerable age ;  
Infants and women perish in their rage ! . . .  
. . . Then must avenging butchery begin :  
Their sin we strangle with our stronger sin.  
England must join the anarchic devil's dance,  
That wilders and exhausts delirious France !

Who declared war ? for ye shall bear the  
blame !

History seeks your insignificant name  
To pillory with everlasting shame !

Who declared war ? The man who dared to  
teach

That men are natural enemies each to each ;  
Set in uncompromising battle array  
Labour and wealth : the fruit you eat to-day  
Glazes very crimson, scribbling Galifet !  
What ! shall Wealth kneel upon the fainting  
forms

Of millions whom scarce a raiment warms,  
Draining their very heart's blood leisurely,  
And shall we wonder when with frenzied cry,  
Beyond endurance urged, at last they leap  
To murder gorged wealth as it lies asleep ;  
The legal armed oppressor of his neighbour,  
He who hath goaded overdriven labour,  
A peaceful tyrant, the Red Flag unfurled :  
He stands accursed of God, and of the world !

"A man must grab whatever he can get :  
We human creatures are not angels yet"—  
So chuckle, cynic Mephistopheles !  
Relish you violent replies like these ?  
Bring forth your mitrailleuse ! but, hypocrite,  
It was yourself who nursed the need for it.  
Yea, you may shoot them ; you may drown  
the people

In their own life-blood ; every Christian steeple  
May echo to the clang of jubilant bells  
Reeling, aflame with flags of joy for hells  
Of cruel vengeance underneath the cross !  
Peal with Te Deums for a people's loss,  
Cathedral organs golden in the gloom !  
Yet know that these from every vengeful doom  
Arise more terrible ! their ghosts assume  
More formidable forms, and multiply !

Ah ! the red sea returns to overwhelm you horribly !  
Merciless mow them ! form the Holy Alliance,  
To ravening hungry brethren breathe defiance ;  
For weapons brandish, oh ye monarchs holy,  
Dead hands of Him who living helped the  
lowly ;

Yea, in the name of Christ, the poor man's God,  
Stamp down his carcass in the bloody  
sod ! . . .

. . . There is *War* in London !

. . . Then I cried, "Lord, how long?  
what hope is ours ?"

Then dawned a twilit winter morn of showers.  
I heard not the artillery's loud roar,  
Nor plunge of shrieking shells, nor any more  
Horrible human screams of civil war.  
My soul had but foreboded the fell riot :  
In the foul alley reigned unbroken quiet,  
Even as erst : three figures made their way  
To where the unhappy starving woman lay :  
Three mutual strangers from a different home,  
Each wondering why the other one has come.  
The first, an old and venerable man,  
From whose grand countenance there falls a  
ban

On our vain follies, on our wallowing sin,  
When we are blessed enough a glance to win ;  
He seeks admittance, he will enter in.  
The other is a woman past her prime,  
Still beautiful, although the wintry rime

Silvers her forehead ; she is pure and calm,  
And from her loving visage heavenly balm  
Falls for the sorrowful ; she has lived her  
sorrow.

Both of these angels facelight seem to borrow  
From the same Jesus with the younger one ;  
Who smiles, a sweet yet homely-featured nun.  
I know not with what form the old man's  
thought

Invested his divine lore when he taught :  
That elder highborn lady, as you list,  
You may call Puritan, or Calvinist.  
The younger woman held the ancient creed  
Of Christendom : in soul, and life and deed,  
They differ little ; in explaining much :  
One feels the Christ arisen when they touch.  
Do they not bear a living love to her,  
And him who darkens by the sufferer ?  
I turned ; for in mine ears one spake with  
pity,

"If there be ten there, I will spare the  
city." . . .

. . . There is Peace in London !

#### APRIL GLEAMS

APRIL gleams !  
Emerald upland pasture seems  
A silent undulating sea :  
Quietly  
Twinkling, red as planet Mars,  
A short shower's fallen stars  
Gem the multitudinous blade ;  
Daisy sprinkles every glade :  
On a tree,  
Rising silvern slenderly,  
Young leaves, delicate as dreams,  
Inhale the gleams,  
April gleams !

Thin and rare,  
Every leaf, a flake so fair,  
Single inlays a pale blue air,  
Where the tree  
Rises highest o'er the lea ;  
Lower all his leafy form  
Stirs upon a mild grey storm,

Moving soft impearled with rays  
From a winglike fringe of blaze.  
Yonder pool  
Shrines a skiey fleece of wool,  
Unravelling mist, azure and gleams,  
April gleams.

Faint and grey,  
Far below me, far away,  
Fades the landscape like a sea  
Tenderly :  
Cuckoo answering cuckoo-call,  
Long low notes arise and fall,  
Soft grey voices all in tune  
With the hushed and bloomy swoon  
Of the lea,  
Fading far, a harmony  
Of leaf and flower, of innocent glee,  
Of turtle-coloured cloud and stream,  
And tender tones and loving dream,  
And April gleam !

Cuckoo-flowers,  
Wet with slant of shiny showers  
Rainbow-braided ! Very fair,  
With a frail and fleeting air,  
All the scene !  
We remember what hath been :  
It hath promise for the young ;  
They who have lived over long  
In the evanescent glory  
Feel bewildering human story.  
Love, with Friendship tender and true,  
Hope and Life will vanish too,  
Youth with Innocence ; all but seems ;  
Glimmer a moment elfin dreams,  
April gleams !

1872.

#### SONG OF SUMMER

SWEETER seems to you the morning  
Than the day !  
Dearer to your soul the delicate  
Blush of May,

Than a glow of summer roses  
 On the heart of June :  
 Yea, the dewy star of morning  
 Conquers noon !  
 Ah ! but Phosphor only fadeth  
 Into light ;  
 Spring will yield his breath to summer—  
 Day will wane to night !  
 Summer, with his face to winter,  
 Leaves delight !  
 Hear the passionate Summer say,  
 "Love me a little while you may,  
 Ere I pass away !"

### IN EARLY SPRING

TO MY SISTER

DARLING, the wine-dark masses of our wood,  
 Under a travelling cloud surcharged with  
 rain,  
 Have dim-green columned vistas, all imbued  
 With faint blue smoke from smouldering  
 leaves that wane,  
 Or kindling glow :  
 But as I rove along the yielding grass  
 Fringing the river, lo ! my musing eyes,  
 With mild swift force made captive as they  
 pass,  
 Gladden, as when with sense of sweet  
 surprise  
 A voice we know  
 Of one we love returning unaware,  
 Longed for, not looked for, summons like  
 a dream ;  
 So seems yon willow touched with verdure  
 rare,  
 Slanting slim lines of green rain, in a gleam  
 Of fleeting glow,  
 Athwart her stem ; another willow nigh  
 Springs foliaged fountainlike and falls on high,  
 Evanescent in drifts of spray,  
 Green exhalation thinned away,  
 While faint airs blow.  
 Some pensile leaves play wanton with the  
 river,  
 And graze each mantling ripple as it slides

Soft, shadow-bosomed, with a dainty shiver  
 Kissing the leaf, ere swooning it subsides !  
 Yet hearken ! now  
 In tones renewed the dear unboded call  
 Of nearing Spring enchants my willing ear ;  
 For as I pass, now furtive-breathed, now  
 clear,  
 Coos the woodpigeon with a plaintive fall !  
 Behold a flow  
 Of yellow daffodil salutes my sight :  
 First smile of Nature waking from the night  
 Of deadly winter ; fluent among boughs  
 Winds in and out bird-music, to arouse  
 Each budding bough ;  
 For still the bronzy tracery so fine  
 Reveals amid their rich perplexity  
 Many a brown bird in the swift sunshine  
 Startling and fading ; when he dips to fly  
 You well may know,  
 Noting on intervals of emerald floors  
 In tender subtle mysteries of grass  
 His shadow, while he buoyant sinks and soars,  
 Now faint exhaling, now imbibing mass.  
 Still faint and low  
 Spring's witching voice, still hesitating, strewn  
 On desert distances : she moves in sleep  
 With eyes half open : wake her not so soon !  
 While Winter lowers, may she laugh and leap,  
 Whose breath of snow  
 She shrinking feels ? to me it seems the Spring,  
 O darling sister on thy bed of pain !  
 Pauses for thee, her very queen, to bring  
 Thine own eternal joyance to sustain  
 Her, timid doe,  
 With calm assurance from thy spirit's home ;  
 Even as young maids on either hand deploy,  
 Lining a bride's path, waiting till she come,  
 Then follow in the wake of her full joy,  
 Swelling its flow :  
 So, darling, come ! the year but waits for thee :  
 Dislusted else the sunniest Spring for me !  
 Our Springs were wont to gather confidence,  
 Sounding thine eyes for sweet serenity ;  
 Skies, leaves and flowers, still wait to draw  
 it hence ;  
 Linger not now !

Kew, 1870.

## HARVEST

GARNER in the golden grain !

He that fares immersed in wheat  
Sees a russet mellow main,

Falling from the upland, meet

Lavender horizons warm,

Blent with opaline warm skies ;

Verdure-isles of cloudy form

In descending meet his eyes ;

Round them, like a sea at rest

Glassy sliding up the sand,

Simmers harvest, many a crest

Hither and thither drooping bland,

Weighted every leaning ear

With the treasure of the year.

Garner in the golden grain !

Yonder shining sickle cleaves ;

Bronzy harvestmen sustain

Thwart one another golden sheaves,

Whose luxuriant honours all,

Marrying, seem tawny toil

Of a foaming water-wall,

When wave meets baffled wave's recoil.

Nigh to one of these a child

In a little cart is laid,

Sleeping in the air so mild,

Where a linden with sweet shade

Softens all the radiance,

Within the reaping father's glance.

Garner in the golden grain !

All, aglow upon the hill,

Unforeboding will remain,

Till the sickle gleams, until

All shall placidly resign

Pleasant homely life afield,

Where the youngling flowers twine.

Only now we saw them yield,

Lithe and blithe, and green when wind

Ruffled them to silky waves,

Playing merrily : so we find

Aged pilgrims near the graves,

Mellow and wise, and loving, wait

Swift inevitable fate :

We weep who lose them ; they are still,

While One bears them where He will.

## A CHRISTIAN'S FUNERAL

SLIM boles of trees divide the purple haze  
Of far-off mountain, and the range subsides  
Into an ocean-azure of sweet bays,

While over all, mingling with all, abides

A brooding influence of blessed spring

Newly returned, a blue light of warm air ;

And Earth lies, like a child awakening

In some sweet home familiar and fair,

Whereunto it has travelled unaware

In slumber, with a dimly happy smile,

That shall be rapture in a little while.

Against a wall of rustic church I lean

In a small graveyard, where the grass revives

Now from the restful unaspiring green

Wherewithal under winter snow it lives,

And stirs about the marble of two graves,

One large, one small white stone, two grassy  
waves,

One longer for a woman grey, and one

Small for a child who used to love the sun.

Nigh unto these a silent multitude

In sombre mourning garb hath gathered now,

One human cloud on earth's rejoicing mood,

About an open grave with shadowed brow ;

Many a cottager to see the end

Of one who was a master and a friend ;

Through a long life a just and righteous  
man,

A tender, human-hearted Puritan ;

With his own hands assuaging every need,

On his own faith inviting each to feed.

All we around him wore a seemly woe ;

But one upon her heart received the blow ;

And as she bent above her mother's tomb,

The while her sire we gathered to the gloom,

Now winter laid a hand upon her hair,

Full many a weeping peasant standing there

Averred that he, beholding her to-day,

Seemed to behold her mother passed away.

All this fair scene men called his property !

Say will it veil its loveliness awhile

From all the world because the Master's eye

No more may answer any sunny smile ?

Though through long years his Spirit brooded  
 here,  
 Presiding, guarding, moulding all the place;  
 Any man now may ruin it with no fear  
 Of any frown on his imperial face.  
 When we returned within the house we knew,  
 How strange to find all things familiar  
 Unmoved without him, which the while we  
 grew  
 In earlier years, like rays around a star,  
 Had ne'er a being sundered from his own!  
 Now grim-ranged armour, portraits glower-  
 ing down,  
 Mellow ancestral figures from the past,  
 Assumed their proper awfulness at last—  
 Pathetic shells of withered human life,  
 Dumb presences, with blurred humanities  
 too rife,  
 Lavished in laughter and in tears,  
 With hopes and fears,  
 On bitter, restless rolling of the years!

Here every great and every trivial thing  
 Bore impress of his anxious ordering:  
 Now we may change it all, nor ever dread  
 Remonstrance from the venerable dead.  
 Even if the ancestral place he loved so well  
 Into cold alien hands the heir should sell,  
 He would not turn unrestful where he lies,  
 Rapt from our world and our fatuities!  
 Yea, if the chapel where for many a year  
 His heart was lavished from this hour should  
 bear  
 Proclaimed the very creed he most abhorred,  
 No moan of sorrow from his grave were  
 poured.

Ruins deserted of long-lingering light,  
 Faces unsouled set in eternal night,  
 These bannered halls and corridors we knew,  
 Where innocent, winged the feet of childhood  
 flew!  
 For gone is he who welcomed us of old.  
 It seems as though, while musingly he told  
 Concerning some ancestral painted face,  
 Pausing before it, sorrowing for the race  
 Of men because they are transitory gleams  
 Along the ocean of eternity,

He unaware, as in confusing dreams,  
 Paled, looking awful; left us bewilderingly,  
 To re-emerge himself among the ghosts  
 Up yonder, who with silent following eyes  
 Brood ever in mysterious dim posts;  
 And since he joined their solemn, leaguering  
 hosts,  
 We lie down wakeful, waiting a surprise;  
 Life sounds all hollow, mined with mysteries,  
 Ready to crumble baseless into smoke,  
 To vanish in the moment of a look.

Is all then over? is he only dust?  
 Can it be, in the face of such a trust?  
 No shadow of misgiving ever swept  
 The wondrous light of faith wherein he slept.  
 He knew, yea, toiled that all around should  
 know,  
 The life of saints hath birth but when they go.  
 And in this faith dark, long-delaying death  
 But now he greeted, giving away his breath.  
 Ah! did he waken even when he died  
 Upon the bosom of the Crucified?  
 When hymns one sang him waned upon his ear,  
 Did angel hallelujahs peal more clear?  
 Ah! did he pass from trust that seemeth dull,  
 Beside the vision beautiful?  
 Or did the vision fade for ever away  
 When his poor pale lips might no longer pray?  
 When sick at heart I kneeling with the crowd  
 Heard him pour forth his fervent soul aloud  
 Nightly to God, as though he saw the Lord,  
 Yea, touched and held his very written word,  
 Ah was he sane, who saw the glory gleam,  
 Or I, foreboding all was but a dream?  
 Foreboding there is none to hear us call,  
 Or lift us from the inevitable fall;  
 That all this ardent longing he will lose  
 Then when the mortal weakness shall con-  
 fuse,  
 Dissolving all the human?—we shall perish,  
 Though, kneeling in our dust, our children  
 cherish  
 Our old illusion!—'tis a bleak denial,  
 Ruthlessly rolling in their hour of trial  
 The very solid earth from underneath  
 Weak feet that waver; from a labouring breath  
 Stealing the air that hardly saves from death!

And can ye doubt, believers, we would share

Ennobling hopes that save you from despair?  
Alas ! alas ! for he had seemed estranged,  
Since old horizons of my spirit changed  
In later years—no marvel this should be !  
Only a sorrow it was to him and me.  
Now I remembered little save the days  
Of his dear coming to my school with rays  
Of never-failing, kindly happiness,  
Beaming from all his countenance to bless  
Me in the breezy, hill-built school, so dear  
To many a boyhood, yet to mine a fear,  
A very loathing—I may scarce recall  
One face endeared to me among them all !  
Saving for Byron's grave, one boy beloved,  
And some sweet lanes where arm in arm we roved,

I would those years might fade from memory,  
With but one space among them shining high !

Cheery repasts in that small garden trim  
Of the old tavern, whose adornment grim  
Was many a wooden dragon blue and red,  
Where we sat feasting, trellised overhead.  
Nor these, nor golden gift at parting slid  
Into my palm, in anywise lay hid  
From me when I stood by the grave to-day,  
With all the variance vanished far away.

Poor human differences ! at the grave  
Our universal schemes that looked so brave  
Hang the head silent, nebulous, and pale.  
Beside the solemn truth, whose visions fail,  
His, or my own? the impalpable Beyond —  
Doth it for him lie curled within the bond  
Of his imagining any longer? nay !  
Nor less my blind denial faints away  
Here by him, grown more awful than before.  
Surely he doth abide for evermore !

Poor human differences ! lapped in light  
Some calm-lived angel may behold the flight,  
The momentary flight of human things  
Athwart their gleam with multitudinous wings—

To wise, grave eyes a melancholy scene !  
No buoyant wings serene,

Jubilant they for one brief hour may shine,  
Warmly irradiate from the face Divine !  
Nay, but a clash of dissonant loud strife,  
Where each his glimpse of the universal life  
Shrieke forth, infuriate with a presumptuous brother,  
Who dares proclaim to the world his own or any other.

The while we laid him under earth I heard,  
Warbling within a laurel near, a bird  
Who never ceased to warble clear and sweet,  
For all the ghastly noise of shuffling feet  
And griding rope, with tumult ill-suppressed,  
Or silent tears relieving hearts oppressed ;  
Pealing methought with confirmation rife,  
When "I am the resurrection and the life!"  
A solemn human voice proclaimed aloud :  
While vernal airs, with all relenting fountains  
Among the eternal brotherhood of mountains,  
And youngling flowers, and the everlasting sea  
Made sweet accord in deep tranquillity.

His faith endures upon foundations wide  
And firm as the universe, howe'er have aided

The superstructure : evermore abide  
Those well-belovèd lives who may have failed

Our earthly vision in the Life of life ;  
In some abysmal Peace profoundly veiled,  
Where they await us, where we shall be one ;

As may be in the ineffable alone,  
And never in the glory of the mortal strife,  
However hearts may yearn for union.

I foolish, while he prayed, have felt the fear

There may be none in all the worlds to hear :

Surely the Life of life, whene'er we cry,  
Fills our low springs with personality :  
Surely, however lurid lower the gloom,  
Surely, howe'er bewildering the doom,  
All stands established from eternity,  
Adorable, however it may be !

A CATARACT<sup>1</sup>

## UNDER TWO ASPECTS

IN a cavern of a solitary mountain  
 Are thy waters born,  
 Wherein, before the flashing of thy silver  
 fountain  
 From the twilight like another morn,  
 We may hear an inward murmur from the  
 glooming,  
 We may feel a breathing chill!  
 Impelled for a blind longing for a sunny air  
 illuming,  
 With a bubbling and a sliding still,  
 Glide thine infant river-waters ever flowing,  
 While the willow leaves and flowers  
 Fill thy heart of innocent crystal with a glory  
 glowing  
 From their undulating airy bowers!  
 There the children love to play about thy  
 brightness  
 With a joy like thine,  
 With a guileless aimless unforeboding light-  
 ness,  
 And many a limpid laugh like thine.  
 With a beautiful bewilderment thy childhood,  
 Roaming in the forest,  
 Blends with another water of the wildwood;  
 Till strong in youth mature thou pourest,  
 Where all the granite gorge resounding  
 Thunders and lightens evermore,  
 Reels with the terrible splendour of thy  
 bounding,  
 And the plunge of wild white waters, and  
 the roar.

<sup>1</sup> Somewhere in Germany I have read that there is a cataract, which has a marble tablet on the rock by the side of it, recording in gilded letters that his Majesty, the King of the country, was "graciously pleased" to visit the cataract on such or such a day, and "con-  
 descended in his own person to admire the beauties of Nature." I know nothing about this individual king as man; but the point of the inscription is *that it was condescending of him as a king!*

Immortal plunge! terrifically daring,  
 Illumining the gloom with glory;  
 Pines are holding wrung with frenzy, while  
 impetuous winds are bearing  
 All abroad the rumour and tumult of thy  
 story!  
 Lo! the scare of mists that hurry from hell's  
 cauldron recoiling!  
 Fall of a lucid ocean, all a flashing foam!  
 Lo! maidenhair and mosses midway above  
 the boiling,  
 Wooing watery sunshine, love turmoil for  
 a home.

In what primeval cataclysm  
 Thy glory erst was hurled into the abysm  
 Who may disclose? but in a former time  
 So marvelled men before thy might sublime;  
 So ghostly breathed thy shadowy cavern-  
 fountain  
 From far within the solitary mountain,  
 So fresh and healing all thy wave,  
 A minister of life wherever it may lave;  
 That on the height above the cave  
 A temple ruin fading into rock  
 We still may trace, though many a mouldered  
 block  
 The gradual growth of gnarled oak divorce  
 Far from its fellow with unheeded force;  
 While ivy and vine, lush eglantine and  
 bramble,  
 In fair confusion o'er the ruin ramble.  
 Yet in a far-off long-forgotten day  
 Men with hushed voices hither came to pray.  
 To thee, O sacred stream! they raised the  
 shrine,  
 Deeming thee animate with life Divine.  
 How have their memories vanished now in  
 air!  
 We vainly ask what manner of men they were.  
 Our human generations fleeting wonder,  
 Passing along thine everlasting thunder;  
 Shadows of earth, with shadows of the sky,  
 We fleet athwart thy sheeny foam and fly,  
 We are born, and thou remainest, and we die.  
 Children have played around thy playful  
 spring,  
 And many lovers have loved wandering

In thy romantic gorge; while lonely poets  
 come,  
 Passionate for the voice of thy tumultuous  
 home,  
 Laying to heart thy rush of light and sound  
 Voluminous, to sing in turn if they be worthy  
 found.  
 Prophets of old in meditative mood,  
 Solitary dwellers with a salvage brood,  
 Nursed here a smouldering fire of indigna-  
 tion,  
 In vision received unearthly revelation:  
 Ever thy hanging sound stupendous wrought  
 Within their souls unfathomable thought,  
 Until aroused, inspired with thy tempestuous  
 gladness,  
 They blew a people to flame with their own  
 heroic madness!

All these have passed! Hardly a human  
 thing  
 Hath left a trace by thine eternal spring.  
 And yet in sooth what gleams upon the rock  
 Hard by the shattering of the water shock?  
 A marble tablet with some gilded letters!  
 Whereon the country folk inscribe them  
 debtors  
 Of one who deigned to visit and to praise  
 Their parish waterfall in former days!  
 Who then among the shades that came and  
 went  
 Amid the centuries' evanishment,  
 Who then have names regilded year by year,  
 Lest the remembrance of them disappear  
 With other mortal memories from here?  
 Lest the tradition of the wondrous fact  
 That these have seen, yea, praised the cataract  
 'Mong children's children be at length for-  
 gotten,  
 And even such magnanimity lie rotten!

A few have seen thine awful face, O youth  
 Ever renewed! a few with love and inno-  
 cence and truth,  
 Or splendid power of personality  
 May seem to claim a fellowship with thee,  
 To claim some solemn kindred with the sound  
 Imperial inhabiting the gulf profound!

Yet these have ne'er a record carven in  
 marble,  
 Or by the fall, or by the sylvan warble!  
 What shadow more illustrious than all  
 Claims for itself such homage by the fall?  
 Demands among the æons his day alone  
 From the awful hunger of pale Oblivion?

I read—am I deceived?—a common king!  
 Among the waifs indifferent Time may fling,  
 Stranding them here—of kings there moulder  
 many.

No people without hereditary zany!  
 But one of these, living his little hour,  
 Vouchsafed, it seems, to leave a royal dower,  
 With a decoration deigning to invest,  
 O cataract! thine adamantine breast!  
 Glancing in sooth to what he stood before,  
 He deemed he saw thee, deafened with thy  
 roar  
 He deemed he heard thee; but his mind  
 divided

Now wandered to the game the hills provided,  
 Now to one surly, ill-conditioned hind  
 Who had not doffed his bonnet, nor inclined.  
 Howbeit the monarch, turning to the mayor,  
 Was pleased his satisfaction to declare,  
 Was gracious to the local waterfall;  
 And the mayor took it as a personal  
 Compliment, bowing almost with an air  
 Of deprecating such distinction rare—  
 As if the king had patted his little boy,  
 And he could only wish that less alloy  
 Were mingled with the humble offering  
 He dared to set before so great a king.  
 For this in sooth was but the parish sight;  
 They held it cheap who heard it day and night.  
 To every bumpkin from his earliest age  
 Familiar; but yonder in its cage  
 They kept the curious thing that brought  
 them patronage.

Half proud of it, they felt it did them credit,  
 As if themselves, not God Almighty, fed  
 it . . .

. . . Did a Prince really condescend to nod  
 Familiarly to this great work of God!  
 Surely the cataract made a modest hush,  
 Became suffused with a retiring blush,

Yea, and the tittering fluttered cavern fountain  
 Convulsed with boastful bliss the tremulous  
 old mountain !

Slave to courtly etiquette !  
 Military martinet !  
 Master of the ceremonies !  
 If God with lightning touched your eyes,  
 Then might your dazzled vision see  
 Inviolable Liberty !

Hereditary puppet spangled gay,  
 Whom fullgrown babies being amused obey,  
 When some sardonic hidden ventriloquist  
 Speaks through you whatsoever he may list,  
 One must be more than common king to see  
 The glory of this immortal majesty !

Tyrant with a narrow brain,  
 Taking holiest names in vain,  
 Suffered to sport with living joys  
 And living woes, in place of toys ;  
 Ye of the wooden complacent royal faces,  
 Fumbling among live nerves of human races,  
 Clutching worm-eaten hereditary places !  
 Before your realm of human government  
 Ye stand imbecile, idle, impotent,  
 Not more unhearing this immortal chime  
 Than dark to your allotted sphere sublime !  
 Deaf to the long, low wail funereal  
 In yonder gloom, from ruined lives that call  
 Some one to help ! Leave ye your vantage  
 ground,  
 And toil among them till the light be found !

Poor worms ! the fulsome sense of your  
 pale marble  
 Contemptuous rains will insolently garble :  
 And if he flung the royal skeleton  
 (Forbid it loyalty !) with all your own  
 Carcasses in the welter, do ye think  
 Yon hurricane of waters wild would slink  
 Mild like a courtier from the sacred corse,  
 Or shatter all alike without remorse ?

Glory to God on his eternal throne !  
 Give glory to the lowly Man, his Son.

Some light reflected for a moment shone  
 From holy men and mighty : they are gone  
 And still we hear the water's mighty mono-  
 tone :  
 God reigns over the universe alone !

## AT COURT

BEHOLDING with a listless eye  
 A gaily-apparelled train  
 Of many ladies passing by,  
 With a delightful pain  
 My heart was taken unaware.  
 In very sweet suspense ;  
 Amid the crowd unfair and fair  
 A hallowed influence  
 Stole on me, like some fountain sweet  
 That mantles in the brine  
 Of unrefreshing seas to greet  
 A mariner's lips that pine ;  
 Stole on me from a girlish face  
 That passed among the rest ;  
 Like hers whom I may ne'er embrace,  
 Hers who hath never blest  
 These many pallid latter years,  
 Nor may for evermore  
 Shine on my soul for all my tears,  
 As in the days of yore. . . .  
 Was it ever heard that a hallowed face  
 Of one whom hearts enwound  
 Faded slowly, and left no trace  
 In death's chill mist profound,  
 Yet later unto living eyes,  
 That yearned with mute despair,  
 Dawned faint again with sweet surprise,  
 And the old loving air ?  
 Because so warm a human love  
 With tremulous living breath  
 Had power to charm, and melt and move  
 Inviolable Death !  
 Nay, that hath never, never been ;  
 She may not come again,  
 My sister, my long-lost Kathleen,  
 Into our world of pain !  
 For well I know the girlish face !  
 Her child, her very own,

Left here, lest we whom she forsook  
 Might wither all alone !  
 And so in sooth she blooms anew  
 To bless our later time,  
 Beautiful now as when she blew  
 About my boyish prime.  
 Fair child ! thou risest from a grave ;  
 To me thy silken hair  
 Seems radiant with flowers that wave  
 Above thy mother there.  
 Thy face is toward the dawning bright ;  
 And One will lead thee on,  
 Tranquil for ever in the light,  
 Until the day be done !

A VISION OF THE DESERT<sup>1</sup>

METHOUGHT I saw the morning bloom  
 A solemn wilderness illumine,  
 Desert sand and empty air :  
 Yet in a moment I was aware  
 Of One who grew from forth the East,  
 Mounted upon a vasty Beast.  
 It swung with silent, equal stride,  
 With a mighty shadow by the side :  
 The tawny, tufted hair was frayed ;  
 The long, protruding snout was laid  
 Level before it ; looking calm away  
 From that imperial rising of the Day.  
 Methought a very awful One  
 Towered speechless thereupon :  
 All the figure like a cloud  
 An ample mantle did enshroud,  
 Folding heavily dark and white,  
 Concealing all the face from sight,  
 Save where through storm-like rifts there came  
 A terrible gleam of eyes like flame.

Then I beheld how on his arm  
 A child was lying without alarm.  
 With innocent rest it lay asleep ;  
 Awakening soon to laugh and leap ;  
 Yet well I knew, whatever passed,  
 The arm that held would hold it fast.  
 Nor ever then it sought to know  
 Whose tender strength encircled so,

<sup>1</sup> See note D.

Living incuriously wise  
 Under the terrible flame of eyes.  
 In those sweet early morning hours  
 It played with dewy, wreathing flowers,  
 Drinking oft from a little flask  
 Under the mantle : I heard it ask :  
 Yea, and at other times the cooling cup  
 Gentle and merciful He tilted up.

But when the sun began to burn,  
 I saw the child more restless turn,  
 Seeking to view the silent One :  
 Then, growing graver thereupon,  
 It whispered " Father ! " but I never heard  
 If any lips in answer stirred.  
 Yet if no answer reached the child,  
 I know not why he lay and smiled,  
 Raising his little arms on high  
 In a solemn rapture quietly !

The shadow moved, and growing less,  
 A blue blaze ruled the wilderness.  
 The child, alert with life and fire,  
 Gazed all around with infinite desire.  
 Erect he sat, contented now no more  
 To nestle, and feed upon the homely store :  
 He searched the lessening distance whence  
 they came ;  
 He peered into the clear cærulean flame ;  
 His hand would mingle with the shaggy hair  
 Of that enormous Living Thing which bare,  
 Whose feet were planted in the powdery  
 ground  
 With ne'er a pause, with ne'er a sound.  
 Yon fascinating, wondrous Infinite  
 His clear young eyes explored with keen  
 delight :  
 He gazed into the muffled Countenance,  
 Undazzled with the rifted radiance :  
 Then, giving names to all that he espied,  
 He murmured with a bright triumphant  
 pride,  
 " I hold their secret : lo ! I am satisfied."  
 Oh ! it was rare to see the lovely child,  
 As with a gaze ecstatic he smiled,  
 Following with eager, splendour-beaming  
 eyes  
 A bird magnificent, who sailed the skies

Peacefully lay the boy's pale, silent head :  
 And, looking long, I knew that he was dead.  
 Then all my wildered anguish forced a way  
 Through my wild lips : " Reveal, O Lord,  
 I pray,

Whither thou carriest him ! " I cried aloud :  
 No sound responded from the shadowy  
 shroud ;

Only methought that something like a hand  
 Was raised to point athwart the shadowy  
 land ;

And while afar the dwindling twain were  
 borne,

I, gazing all around with eyes forlorn,  
 Divined the bloom of some unearthly morn !

Where was he carried ? to an isle of calm,  
 Lulled with sweet water and the pensile palm ?  
 Vanishing havens on the pilgrimage  
 Surely some more abiding home presage !  
 Or must the Sire attain always alone  
 The happy land, with never a living son ?  
 O ! awful, silent, everlasting One !  
 If thou must roam those islands of the West,  
 Ever with some dead child upon thy breast,  
 Who would have hailed the glory, being blest,  
 Eternity were one long moan for rest !  
 For do we not behold thee morn by morn,  
 Issuing from the East with one newborn,  
 Carrying him silently, none knoweth whither,  
 Knowing only all we travel swiftly thither ?

### THE WATER-NYMPH AND THE BOY :

I LIVE in the heart of a limpid pool,  
 In the living limpid heart of a pool :  
 I lie in a flow of crystalline,  
 Where silvery fish with jewelled eyne  
 Float silent, and the ripple-gleam  
 With many a delicate water-dream  
 Moves the face of flowers to quaver,  
 Hanging where the wavelets waver ;

<sup>1</sup> A legend tells of a lake in the Black Forest  
 that bathers have been drawn down by water-  
 spirits there.

Daffodil, hyacinth, spring flowers,  
 Who slumber veiled from sunny showers,  
 That only trickle feebly through  
 Forest foliage from the blue.

My streamlet sparkles in the pines,  
 And here in lambent flame declines ;  
 For the sun has burst his leafy thrall,  
 Kissing it passionate in the fall.

I love to feel the water plash  
 Merrily into my pool,  
 With a swift reverberating flash  
 Of soft foam beautiful.

One brilliant surface shrines the sky,  
 Another young lit leaves on high,  
 While yet another shadowed o'er,  
 Below deep emerald, my floor  
 Reveals, all wavering below  
 My water's everlasting flow.

O the beautiful butterflies  
 That flutter where the runnel flies !  
 Silvery glistening over stones  
 Where yonder nightingale intones,  
 Where he flutes the livelong day,  
 Learning the water's liquid lay ;  
 A lovelier rendering is heard  
 Fresh from the genius of a bird ;  
 While emulous water vainly tries  
 To glisten like the glistening eyes  
 Of nightingales in vernal leaves,  
 Where yon rosebower softly heaves :  
 Soon will their mellifluent strain  
 Woo the rose to life again !

But surely there are lovelier things  
 Than these are with their cinnamon wings !  
 Whose grace hath more compelling spells  
 Than all mine azure damozels !  
 For as I lay in my pool one day,  
 A cloud released a gleam,  
 And the jewel heart of my home grew gay  
 With a glorifying beam.  
 There came a rustle in the trees :  
 I deemed a silver doe  
 Would sip the ripple of the breeze,  
 Wandering to and fro ;  
 Listless I watched until he should  
 Arrive here from the shadowy wood.

It was no deer ; it was a boy  
 Assailed and took my heart with joy !

Stealthily, daintily, he came,  
 Flooding all my sense with flame.  
 He was clad in a ruby dress,  
 That clung to his breathing loveliness,  
 While hose of opalescent silk  
 Revealed his delicate limbs of milk.  
 Shyly, timid as a doe,  
 He glanced if aught were near or no,  
 Then sought him out a pleasant spot  
 With clustering forget-me-not,  
 And leisurely upon the brink,  
 His jewelled raiment to unlink  
 Began ; that yielding made a way  
 For hungering eyes of mine to stray  
 In his fair bosom, velvet fine  
 Flushing it warmly as with wine,  
 Velvet and cambric lingering loth  
 To leave him, yet to faintness both  
 With warm white satiate, from whence  
 Stole overpowering my sense  
 Smooth boy-bosom, whose are twin  
 Rosebuds in a silky skin.

By slender fingers, where the pale  
 Moon rises in a rosy nail,  
 Cleared from all the lordly dress,  
 He shone with native loveliness !  
 Then pressed the grass with shrinking foot,  
 Strawberry blooms that promise fruit,  
 Windflower, violet and moss,  
 And taller flowers that love the loss  
 Of all their living gold upon  
 Those limbs unheeding any one :  
 And yet anon,  
 As he long blades of grassy gloss  
 Perplexed daintily disjoins,  
 A locust leaps upon his loins !  
 Now finding near a shelving rock,  
 Behold ! he cowers before the shock ;  
 Yet heated how he longs to lave  
 His beauty in my cooling wave !  
 His rounded ivory arms have met  
 Over locks of glossy jet :  
 Gracefully curls the form so fair  
 Now upon my yielding air ;  
 Cleaves my laughter-flashing wave,  
 Delighted one so soft and suave  
 To gulf within her glassy grave.

Lo ! many a clear aerial bubble  
 Tells the water-heart's sweet trouble !  
 He lips the ripple, pants and flushes,  
 Thrusts out white buoyant limbs, and pushes  
 With turning palm, a snowy swan  
 Lavishing his bosom upon  
 My mantling water in the sun !  
 Now hath he climbed beside the stone,  
 With filmy lichen overgrown,  
 Where small swift globes of water twinkle :  
 There among the periwinkle  
 Creeping, sidles with a shoulder  
 Pressed upon the verdured boulder,  
 Along a narrow ledge, to wet  
 His shining head within the jet  
 Of foam that skirts my clear cascade,  
 Leaning under, half-afraid.

All my close-clinging vision grew  
 Over him leaping forth anew :  
 He dives ; he rises ; I refrain :  
 He floats upon the shine again.  
 Luxuriant he lies afloat,  
 Half his form, and half his throat.  
 Clear from crystalline that sways  
 Him gently, with alluring haze  
 Veiling some of him from sight.  
 Filming less or more of white  
 Wrist or shoulder, as he moves  
 Fair on wavering water-groves,  
 Hearing a sweet long croon of doves.  
 Flying pansies, butterflies,  
 Moths aflame with crimson dyes,  
 Haunt his vague and violet eyes :  
 Odorous shadow of the trees.  
 Drowsy with a drone of bees,  
 Amorous nightingales enkindling  
 At intervals the air and dwindling.  
 Slim grey waterfall in plashing,  
 On my stone the wave in washing,  
 Sweetest music never ending,  
 Blending, never-ending,  
 Lulls him in his water-wending.

Why, boy-lover, tell me why  
 I was doomed to see thee lie,  
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 Tell me why

Even I  
Am singing now thy lullaby!  
Hear my water sing thee now  
A lullaby!

In thy jasmine throat meander  
Tender lines of dimple,  
And 'tis haunted where they wander,  
While the waters wimple,  
With a shy blue as from veins,  
Where soft throat subsiding wanes  
Into billowy bosom dreaming  
Faintly of the roses;  
Whose dim dream a bud discloses  
In the gleaming  
Undulating almond skin,  
Roses nascent soft therein.  
Ah! the quiet music of thy beauties undulating;  
Ah! to feel, to feel, thy gentle warmth of  
bosom palpitating:  
What breath from heaven was breathing  
behind the fairy flower,  
Whose ample one white petal thy body had  
for dower,  
Blowing so unerringly to mould thee as thou  
art,  
Even so waving waist and limb, and the  
snow about thy heart?  
And if my hands were ne'er to thrill, my  
beautiful, my boy,  
As they filled them with thy bosom, the  
treasure and the joy,  
Why along the ideal limit heaved thy delicate  
form,  
So, nor any otherwise, languid, white and  
warm? . . .

I flung me round him,  
I drew him under;  
I clung, I drowned him,  
My own white wonder! . . .

Father and mother,  
Weeping and wild,  
Came to the forest,  
Calling the child,  
Came from the palace,  
Down to the pool,  
Calling my darling,  
My beautiful!

Under the water,  
Cold and so pale!  
Could it be love made  
Beauty to fail?

Ah me! for mortals:  
In a few moons,  
If I had left him,  
After some Junes  
He would have faded,  
Faded away,  
He, the young monarch, whom  
All would obey,  
Fairer than day;  
Alien to springtime,  
Joyless and grey,  
He would have faded,  
Faded away,  
Moving a mockery,  
Scorned of the day!  
Now I have taken him  
All in his prime,  
Saved from slow poisoning  
Pitiless Time,  
Filled with his happiness,  
One with the prime,  
Saved from the cruel  
Dishonour of Time.  
Laid him, my beautiful,  
Laid him to rest,  
Loving, adorable,  
Softly to rest,  
Here in my crystalline,  
Here in my breast!

#### ALLERHEILIGEN<sup>1</sup>

An abbey in a forest old,  
A forest old of pine,  
Slowly arose where hills enfold:  
Not very far from Rhine:  
And lower a stream that swept the walls  
Fell into silver waterfalls;  
Seven slender falls in a gorge of grey,  
Where the willowherb was wet with spray;

<sup>1</sup> A ruin in the Black Forest.

The rock wore glossy grass like hair,  
And a birch-tree shimmered in soft air ;  
Nor yet stole sweetly over the cool  
Wave, as it glided into a pool,  
    A vesper hymn  
    From the forest dim,  
Nor bells from Allerheiligen !

Flew twenty summers ; the monks were there  
    In a cloistral solitude :  
How few that heard the chaunted prayer  
    Divined the worldly feud  
'Mong lives monotonous and pale,  
Whom weariness would oft assail !  
Yet holy-hearted, gentle men  
Paced the echoing cloister then,  
Learnèd, and kindly to the poor ;  
Some sorely worn who sought to lure  
Rest to a weary wounded heart ;  
And where the mountain cleaves apart,  
Such an one, ere the day's decline  
Like an illumined vellum fine,  
Mused oft upon the sombre green,  
Beyond the fluttering watersheen,  
Of piny hills, toward the sky  
Receding with a softer dye,  
And ever with an airier bloom,  
Till they are fading to a fume :  
Now at eve stole o'er the cool  
Wave, as it glided into a pool,  
    A vesper hymn  
    From the forest dim,  
And bells from Allerheiligen !

Seven hundred summers ; the monks are  
    gone ;  
    Their abbey in the wood  
Resigns in every mouldered stone  
    A human brotherhood !  
Meekly disclaims, a ruin wild,  
Being any more than Nature's child :  
Taken from yore of mother Earth,  
Loves dreaming o'er the time of birth :  
In its old age the interval  
Remembering little, hears a call  
From ministers of earth and sky,  
Woing ever alluringly.

Yet in the sylvan raiment rare  
That soothed a desolate despair,  
The fading ruin seems to know  
Memories that come and go ;  
Memories that float and fly,  
Like a flower's breath bewilderingly ;  
Of when at eve stole o'er the cool  
Wave, as it glided into a pool,  
    A vesper hymn  
    From the forest dim,  
And bells from Allerheiligen !

Closes around an odorous shade  
Of solemn pillared pines,  
Breathing sea-murmurs, being swayed,  
    When musing one reclines.  
Ivy and vine and roses vie  
With old flamboyant tracery :  
Lo ! the carven corbel where  
Hangs a tiny garden fair ;  
Birds have sown it as they pass  
With fairy mosses and with grass :  
A wild bee in a dim chapelle,  
Hovering near a flowerbell,  
With a drowsy murmur droning,  
Imitates a priest intoning,  
With his lowly eyes intent  
Upon the Holy Sacrament !  
Wild geranium and fir  
Perfume the air, in place of myrrh,  
Breathing from a thurifer :  
Winds are jubilant, wail, complain,  
Where many a blaze of jewel-pane  
Heard the tempestuous anthem heave and  
    wane !  
Winds intone a wondrous hymn  
In yonder aisles of forest dim ;  
    But a frail harebell  
    Is the only bell,  
Hangs now in Allerheiligen !

There is a human savour still  
Faintly lingering here,  
Like a melody about a hill  
In a shining summer air ;  
A savour only, a flower scent  
Of wilding thyme concealed and blent  
With mingling marjoram or mint—

So many human lives intense  
Dwindled long to an influence,  
Pervading flower and tower and tree  
With a hallowed melancholy !

All honour would the abbot claim ;  
To-day you scarce may read his name,  
Once gleamed over with altar-flame,  
Though you may note a crosier  
On worn grey marble in a blur !  
This lovely place is a very shrine,  
Where reverent spirits all incline  
Before the mystery Divine . . .

. . . But, lo ! upon the apsidal wall,  
Unseen till now, a monster scrawl—  
Some graceless living creature's name  
Sprawling portentous, and the same,  
When you look nearer, far and nigh  
Defiling all the sanctuary !  
Ah ! many a life's all-hallowed spot.  
Deep with dewy forget-me-not ;  
Many a heart's elysian bower,  
Dearly alive with passion-flower.  
Knows the intrusion of a stare,  
Feels foul feet of a common care :  
" Mene, mene," scrawled with fire,  
Insults our saintliest desire ;  
Our holiest hopes are desecrate  
With the world till they lie desolate !  
Yea, many a shrine  
Where souls incline  
Lies waste like Allerheiligen !

### COME NOT VERY SOON, LOVE

COME not very soon, love,  
To the quiet place ;  
Let it be in June, love,  
In the grace

Of a summer day,  
Very calm and fair,  
Let our Mabel play  
Merry there !

Look between the trees, love,  
Into airy bloom,  
When the summer breeze  
Wafts the fume

Of many a summer flower ;  
Songs from near the nest ;  
My memory shall have power  
To invest

Earth with subtler grace, love,  
And a rarer joy ;  
Who knew me face to face,  
From a boy.

I would not have thee weep  
Hopeless in thy woe ;  
Only from my sleep  
Let there flow

Through the summer light  
Shadow of a loss,  
Mellowing delight  
In my mound of moss !

For the land revealed  
All her heart to me,  
Nor will keep concealed  
Aught from thee. . . .

Now my fault may stain not  
Cheek of thine with tears ;  
Bloom of love may wane not,  
Envied of the years.

Gaze into the distance ;  
Mellow lies the earth ;  
God with sweet insistence  
Held our hand from birth ;

Led us from the far light,  
Where He only knows,  
From the silent starlight,  
Where the souls repose.

He from everlasting  
Led us docile here,  
Joined our hands unfasting ;  
Now recalls me, dear !

Darling, He is yonder  
Wheresoe'er I go ;  
Life nor death may sunder  
From his heart I know.

Therefore, do not weep, love ;  
He is calling home ;  
Still the day is deep, love :  
In the evening come !

## DEATH AND LIFE

## I

DEATH who is our awful master,  
Death, secure of our disaster,  
Awhile allows our wandering.

Life is a disdainful playing  
With a victim ere the slaying,  
Though he murmur merrily.

Merry children laugh a-maying ;  
But the men and women playing  
Feel dead eyes environing.

Dare we turn our backs upon him ?  
Death, for that dishonour done him,  
Aims a blow to mangle us.

Very babes, who cannot cower  
Before annihilating Power,  
Writhe beneath his malison.

Yet the hero-souls defiant  
Baffle, yea, conquer, the pale giant,  
Smiling while he slayeth them !

## II

I seem to be dissolving slowly away,  
Senses and spirit, fading from the day,  
Drawn slowly into darkness and decay.  
As in dull stupefying fumes, amid  
Some dim chill waters where I shall lie hid  
For evermore, my failing sight discerns  
The face of my beloved, how she yearns  
Over me with her tearful eyes, and turns

Impotent arms toward me : long she held  
Me to her side heroical, compelled  
Now in the end to feel me torn from her  
By some dull strength of One who is mightier.

And I must leave her in the world alone,  
Albeit I know there is not any one  
To love her as I love her, so to gaze  
Into her sweet eyes as I used to gaze,  
So with a touch love-light to hold the child,  
Yielding and leaning, mother, yet a child !  
I leave her with our little ones, I leave  
Her in the bosom of One who will not leave,  
Who led us to one another, and will cleave !  
So musing tearfully I faintly smiled,  
Falling asleep, foreboding all was over,  
All over with the singer and the lover.

## III

Lo ! I awaken into lovelier life,  
Into a lovelier celestial life.  
For I am lying on what seems a sea,  
Some opal undulation of sweet sea,  
Gentle and buoyant, full of all delight,  
Nebulous heaving, all a pearly light,  
Freshly alive with air of keen delight  
Full of a spiritual divine release,  
Resolving all the strain of life to peace,  
Soothing and satisfying souls with peace ;  
Relaxing all the weary stress and strain  
Of human hearts disquieted in vain,  
Stealing into an overwrought wrung brain,  
Sweeter than any anodyne for pain,  
Or deep nepenthe of oblivion  
Fallen from shadowy wings on any one !  
So the dear Saviour stilled the waves when He  
Rose in the storm by night on Galilee.

And when I opened wondering faint eyes,  
I felt above me wonderful wide eyes  
Of one from whom exhaled the heavenly calm,  
All light and harmony, and joy and balm !  
But they were wide with wondering surprise ;  
For this sweet angel knew mine earthly life,  
My longing, wavering, turbulent blind life ;  
Had seen a helpless, haggard face that pored  
Beyond the gravestone ; she who knew the  
Lord,

From her own flawless love, familiarly,  
Felt half impelled to smile, and half to cry,  
Moved with incredulous bewildered wonder  
How any poor thing like this lying under  
Should so the Father of our life mistrust,  
Foreboding He may leave it in the dust !  
No sound she breathed ; only in her clear eye  
Compassion dimmed the sweet serenity.  
No anger moved her, only deep compassion ;  
And she looked on me in very tender fashion,  
Even as a tender-hearted woman may  
Look on a wounded bird in sore dismay,  
Whom hunting beast or hunting men may  
follow.

And whom she cherishes in her bosom hollow,  
Nestling, how tremulous, in her bosom hollow !  
Nay, rather I was like a little child  
Found numb by night where mountain snows  
are piled,

Long lying in fever with delirium wild,  
Who now, reviving to a tranquil health,  
Wakes very feeble ; he the tender stealth  
Of softened footfall in the silence hears,  
While in a twilight over him appears  
A lovely, loving face that smiles and weeps :  
He dimly knows his mother ; then he sleeps.

This angel is exceeding fair and tall :  
Soft as a dew, with tender heave and fall,  
Harmony undulates aerial ;  
We were wont to name this air the Pastorâl.  
I know not if she sings the air at all ;  
Flowing it floats aerial wings for all ;  
I see she swings rare fumes ethereal,  
As from a censer nebulously golden,  
Wherein it seems light, odour, and sounds  
are holden ;  
Nay, all the peaceful influences flow,  
From her pure bosom heaving to and fro,  
From her deep bosom more pure than any  
snow !

Flow from her tranquil eyes that do with  
glory glow !

. . . How ! doth it wane, the Vision ? will  
it wane ?  
It wanes ! and yet I hear as erst a strain,

A strain of ravishment arise and fall,  
A heavenly symphony, the Pastorâl ! . . .  
I am awake, and still the music flows ;  
I am alive, and ever clearer grows  
The form of a sweet woman whom I love ;  
Over some ivory keys her fingers move :  
Hers was the sound ! she plays the Pastorâl !

Dear death relenting leaves me by her side,  
Dragged erst like moaning shingle with the  
tide,  
Drawn out adrift upon the lethal tide !  
For while by night she roamed the paly sand,  
Searching with mournful eyes afar from land,  
Listless she heard the homeless ocean beat,  
Till from the gloom a foamy flicker fleet  
With ghostly whisper laid me at her feet.

## IV

Soon was I carried into sunny air,  
And she was by me, very near me there.  
Athwart the little bridge of stone we went,  
Where darkened houses with wood balconie  
leant  
Over a stream of purest chrysolite,  
And women kneeling laved their linen white :  
There from far piny mountains drifted down  
Innumerable logs of gleamy brown ;  
And while the tinted walls are fraught with  
vine,  
Figs of full foliage with planes incline  
Shadowy bowers from the sister side ;  
Along their ever-softening narrowing line  
Mine eyes are wooed, how tenderly, to glide  
Till they are lost in yonder mountain bloom,  
Immeasurable majesty of gloom !  
Where lonely pine-forests primeval loom  
Among scarred crags and gorge and precipice,  
Labouring toward untravelled realms of ice.

Ye, gleaming plains, ye, silver spires, abide  
Ever in your own glory with no pride,  
Albeit ye dwell so far above the world !  
For when your opaline rare mists are curled  
Athwart you wandering, your forms appear  
Fair fleeting phantoms from a heavenlier  
sphere.

Once more my soul saluting you may rise,  
 With awful rapture filming her meek eyes,  
 To worship you, ye throned Divinities !  
 And you, ye autumnal fairy woodland flowers,  
 Who smile irradiate with sunny showers,  
 And you, ye leaves who flutter in the breeze  
 On all your faintly mellowing full trees !  
 Thou, dimpling stream, ye, twinkling blades  
 of grass,

Tenderly suave, salute me as I pass !  
 Thou, little robin, russet in apparel,  
 Sprinkling my faint heart with thy dewy  
 carol,

Mazily singing in thy fair apparel,  
 A labyrinth of fantasy thy carol !  
 Is it a fond delusion, fond and sweet,  
 That so ye welcome long-delaying feet ?

Ah, mother Nature ! surely well she knew  
 That of her children there are very few  
 To love her as I love her : she forbore,  
 While in the act to lay me dumb and froze  
 In her dark bosom ; gave me a little more  
 Time to throb with her glory, and dispense  
 To all some feeling of her influence,  
 Feeling of her immaculate excellence.

Howe'er it be, there is enchanted light,  
 There is a magic of supreme delight  
 Upon the blessed face of Her to-day.  
 A light I scarce remember since I lay  
 A listless boy in a sweet wood alone :  
 Sunlight was in the happy leaflets blown :  
 Tender pulsation of a turtle flown  
 From twilight green into blue open summer ;  
 A purple thyme-tuft, haunt of many a hummer,  
 Revealed Her : there unveiling fair She burst  
 On me unworthy, dazed and breathless first,  
 Lowly adoring now, nay, passionate as erst !

So from the mortal weakness I awoke,  
 And on me, fresh like Heaven, Nature broke.  
 Yet, ah ! when Death indeed shall seal mine  
 eyes,  
 Surely it were a very sweet surprise  
 If I might open them in such a wise.  
 Under those eyes !

v

Death is but a shadowy master,  
 Breathing shadowy disaster,  
 Whom to front is Victory !

One there is that ruleth over  
 Man the hater, man the lover,  
 Universal Deity ;

Life and Death to all divideth :  
 Though one hopeth, one derideth.  
 Yet I know that each abideth  
 In his own eternity !

Man and woman, mountain, sea,  
 Living creature, flower and tree.  
 Founded in Eternity !

## THE OLD PIANO

In the twilight, in the twilight,  
 Sounding softly, sounding low,  
 Float some cadences enchanted,  
 Eerie songs of long ago.

In the gloaming, in the gloaming,  
 Sits our child with lips apart  
 Near her mother who is singing,  
 Near the woman of my heart.

O how thinly, and how feebly  
 Rings the ancient instrument !  
 When it opened, slowly yielding,  
 What a weird unwonted scent !

Plaining wildered all forlornly,  
 As it were surprised from leath ;  
 On a plate of faded ivory  
 Some lost name faint wavereth.

Wildered sorely, wildered sorely,  
 In oblivion mouldering,  
 To be challenged now for music  
 That the dead were wont to sing !

Are they rising, are they rising,  
As I gaze through mist of tears,  
In the savour, in the music,  
Vanished visions of the years?

Stilly stealing, stilly stealing,  
Glide the dead in companies;  
Thinly flow their words and laughter,  
Faintly radiant their eyes.

And they mingle, lo! they mingle,  
With my living wife and child,  
Seem to thrust them from their places  
And confuse their presence mild.

See a maiden, a fair maiden,  
Vestured in a garb of yore,  
Singing yonder while her lover  
Pleads with longing eyes for more!

Then a mother, a young mother,  
With her child, in guise of eld,  
She appears; full blown to woman  
Now the maid whom I beheld.

Then a widow, a grey widow,  
See her now! before he died  
Love lay withered—worn and faded,  
Lo! she plays where played the bride.

. . . In a moan of wind they vanish,  
Dead and living; I alone  
Hear old Time insanely mumble  
In the sea's low monotone!

LYNMOUTH, 1869.

### ON RICHMOND HILL—1870<sup>1</sup>

AMONG fresh, innocent, leafy bowers we gaze,  
With moveless fountains of white bloom  
embossed,  
Infinite bowers blending in blue haze  
Afar, to slumbrous woodland waves untossed.

<sup>1</sup> See note E.

These in one region yonder shine with rays  
Of some uncertain lustre warm, that may  
Be the sweet river's; opalescent beams  
Faintly athwart the tender turtle-grey  
Of heaven slant; the violet shy gleams  
Forth from sere fern; earth lies this April day  
Waking from winter sleep to fair day dreams  
Of summer happiness and early love,  
Such as were hers in Eden when a bride.  
With cuckoo-call and tender crooning dove  
She murmurs joy; until in her soft side  
The wound where man a keen, cold anguish  
drove,  
Reopens—man her offspring and her pride!  
Ah! for that morning when the youthful Sun  
First saw the face of his beloved one,  
Arose from sleep to find her by his side,  
To woo her and to win her for a bride!

For lo! a knell all unexpectedly  
Breaks from the leafy lowland slow and deep,  
Wailing to heaven a long heart-broken sigh.  
One moment Earth forgot that she must weep,  
And gazed abroad with visionary eye,  
Was young once more—yet pitilessly creep  
Into their wonted lair within her heart  
The loathsome, venomous old memories:  
Now unavailing long-drawn wails impart  
Her grief to careless unresponding skies:  
They knell like drops of blood from forth  
the heart,  
Slow falling to suffuse with taint of blood  
All opening summer's fair felicities  
Of sunny air, of song-resounding wood.  
It fills and loads with umbrage of fell blight  
All burdened space; a cancer merciless,  
It heaves and throbs through all the summer  
light;  
And on my soul the heavy tollings press.  
I may not see the mournful human sight  
Beneath the hill, concealed among the trees,  
Where rests a homely village in the plain;  
But the knell says a balmy summer breeze  
Blows idly there upon a human pain!  
One leaves there some loved life beneath the  
sod,  
Half longing with the lifeless to remain,  
And meekly bleeds, or idly curses God!

O Earth, our mother! was it well or ill,  
 To chafe so restless in thy natal home  
 Of sweet unconscious innocence, until  
 There dawned in thee the glory and the gloom  
 Of human vision and of human will?  
 Then was revealed to thee that thou art fair;  
 Afloat in some sublime immensity:  
 Then in thy heart immeasurable despair  
 Awful arose: to love, and yet to die!  
 Thirsting for God to faint upon void air!  
 To fall with throes of infinite desire  
 On phantom bosoms with a baffled cry—  
 Feed with illusions ever-ravaging fire!

But Earth made answer, Surely it is well!  
 Divine Desire creative moves in all;  
 And in man's soul heaves with an ocean-swell,  
 Restless, impetuous, imperial,  
 That forms a glory and gloom wherein to  
 dwell.

A man grows god who may be loved and love;  
 Yet fades and faints, thronged round with  
 shadowy ghosts,  
 Menacing from the night, who till he move  
 Wait for their life—to bloom among their  
 hosts,  
 Luxuriant from broken hearts of Love.  
 Yet will their dust inflate a meaner crew!  
 Therefore, ye fair and wise, forbear your  
 boasts—  
 Misgrowth and pain inevitable as you.

My weary heart responded, It may be  
 Some ardent spirits in the stars may deem  
 Our weal and woe harmonious pageantry  
 Of light and shadow on a stately stream!  
 When I rejoice, it seemeth so to me.  
 But some crushed lives can only feel the pain  
 Absorbing all, or fellow-worm's unrest.  
 And there arrives an hour when we are fain  
 To leave the alluring visionary quest  
 For a friend to fill our need, endure the strain  
 Of our so wayward leaning feebleness—  
 (Truth, cruel feigning she may be possest,  
 Cajoles but amorous boys with her caress!)—  
 To slip the neck from under yokes of toil,  
 Where like dumb beasts unwondering we  
 tread;

Weighed upon with a languor of recoil  
 Toward that abysmal Peace wherein the dead  
 Dissolve to purify them from the moil.  
 Then would we be the children chosen of  
 Earth,

Unto the holy Silence whence she came  
 To bear her tribute—she in solemn mirth  
 Moves ever with immortal eyes aflame—  
 To fresher life with morning dews of birth,  
 Lose it in deep oblivion of death!  
 Here might I quiet pass to whence I came,  
 Here to the songful summer yield my breath!

Here on the pleasant growing grass to lie;  
 Here on the innocent heart of spring to fail!  
 Over a life's confusion draw the veil  
 Of turf and daisies and the summer sky!  
 Repenting of the clamorous hot fever,  
 And blindly inharmonious endeavour,  
 Wherewith my clashing life presumes assail  
 Our mother Nature's pure serenity.  
 With shamefast eyes, behold! I meekly bring  
 My life's confusion, a slain offering,  
 Saying to Nature—Lo! thine own again;  
 Take for remoulding in a happier vein!  
 Woe for the lambs who trusted them to me,  
 Lambs whom I love, yet doom to misery!  
 Woe for the lovely lands were mine to bless,  
 For they are left a desolate wilderness.  
 Behold! I cower at thy sacred feet,  
 There let my turbulent being dissolving fleet,  
 A tremulous foam blown inward from the  
 wave:  
 All lives receive thy blessing on their  
 grave! . . .

. . . Nay, let me rest here all alone awhile,  
 Feeling the balmy summer softly blow,  
 As on a cloud, upon my mood of woe,  
 Until it vanish in the clear sun-smile.  
 Von singing bird avails to reconcile  
 Me with sweet life: take me not at my word,  
 Offended Love! for thou hast many a bird!  
 Such song the dark self-slayer might beguile,  
 With ecstasy of life made eloquent  
 In the green twilight; only an open ear  
 And a brown bird have made this ravishment!  
 Still may I love, and still one holds me dear;

Still may I joy to march with hosts of light,  
Conquering kingdoms from the formless  
night;

Still may I pour some wine of sympathy  
For brothers lying in a sorer strait than I.  
There is work to do—arise! let the bed-  
ridden die!

### WAS IT WELL?

Was it well, was it well?  
When at evening shadow fell  
In the great cathedral square,  
With a gable-roofing fair,  
And the only glimmer there  
Was a flutter of a dress,  
Ever waning less and less,  
As my gaze enamoured clung,  
Till the moving masses rung  
It earthward and it fell;  
Was it well, was it well?

Was it well, was it well?  
Where a fragrant azure fume  
Pervades a Gothic gloom,  
And jewelled gleams illumine,  
With a melody of lights,  
Marble slumber of the knights,  
Till their stony bosoms bloom  
Warm to flowers on the tomb:  
There the morrow at a shrine  
On thy kneeling form Divine  
Mine eyes to worship fell:  
Was it well, was it well?

Was it well, was it well?  
Where a bubbling water fell  
From the snakes in carven stone,  
Grasses fine about them blown;  
In the greenwood lying prone  
At thy feet, a boy in love  
Murmured idle rhymes he wove:  
While we mingled flame of eyes,  
In leaf-lattices the skies  
With soft suffusion fell:  
Was it well, was it well?

Was it well, was it well?  
Now the holy glamour fell  
Upon every living thing  
From the spirit of the spring:  
Birds in yielding sweetly sing:  
Flowers have innocent confest  
Soft allurements of the West;  
Leaves and herbs benumbed in death  
Feel and bless the living breath,  
Gladden hill and dale and dell:  
Was it well, was it well?

Was it well, was it well?  
Only we defied the spell:  
We were timid, we were wise,  
Maimed the wings of Love that flies,  
Putting out his dovelike eyes:  
Tamed with prudence hearts that yearned,  
Cooled with caution breasts that burned;  
Bosoms dreams of love made tingle,  
Limbs afever till they mingle,  
Only they defied the spell:  
Was it well, was it well?

Was it well, was it well?  
Ask no more! I cannot tell.  
Spring confused her lovers all;  
Each obeyed the sacred call;  
Only we refused to fall,  
Sanely, calmly self-incurred  
'Mid such sweet madness of the world!  
O'er twain that trembled into one  
Love's own sweet mouth hath vainly blown,  
Futile his golden tide hath flown,  
Henceforth for ever passing on,  
And we are still apart, alone!  
Might our clashing kindle Hell?  
Ask no more, I cannot tell;  
Was it well, was it well?

### PALINGENESIS

In solemn precincts of the forest aisles  
There is a wondrous gathering of life;  
And all the vacant dull monotony  
Of netted wood softens mysteriously

To tender inarticulate prophecy,  
 A boundless budding, fluttering anon  
 As with green wings unfolding for a flight.  
 Now all my soul rejoices reverently  
 'Mid cool diffusion of a greening dim,  
 Kneels hearkening the still small voice of  
 God ;

Nature from mouths of myriads new born  
 Anew revealing her eternal youth.

Lo ! all the champaign saturate with light,  
 Softly alive with magical green flames,  
 Grass blades commingling multitudinous  
 With daisies clustered, scattered, like to stars,  
 And kingcups floating buoyant everywhere ;  
 Now loose-limbed lambs push nestling to  
 their mothers ;

Haunts of primrose and frail windflower  
 rejoice ;

Till later, wandering by the brimming river,  
 I view horse-chestnut massy-foliaged  
 Lift, as with eager hands innumeros,  
 Up the blue morn an offering of flowers,  
 While hawthorns near, sunsmitten to the core,  
 Froth over in dumb ecstasy of bloom.  
 Silvery winds the river from afar,  
 Dim-frosted from its currents here and there,  
 With hazy tree-clusters impalpable  
 Rolled as a border ; nigh me vivid turf  
 Gleams to the edge, but fringing fair the path  
 Wave pliant sword-like rushes o'er the flood,  
 Feasting the eye with gliding opal light  
 Of water 'mong green pennons at their play ;  
 And there full soon the water-hen will brood  
 On rushes pulled and woven to a nest  
 In a rich twilight of mild emerald,  
 Feeling sweet motions under the warm breast,  
 Lulled with soft flicker of the wave below,  
 And gentle whispering of airs above.

Yet later, lo ! the frail acacia,  
 Steeping in light her soft, luxuriant hair,  
 Sensitive flushes like a lovely woman,  
 All conscious when a cloud moves off the sun ;  
 Her leafy clusters delicate as down  
 Seem self-sustaining, buoyant in blue air,  
 Move, as informed with some sweet sister  
 spirit

Yielding a gentle unimperious will  
 To every mood of zephyr fantasy ;  
 Obtrudes not her soft presence on the sky,  
 Inlaying it with tender tracery ;  
 Seems there to dwell by loving sufferance,  
 Or primal right of native harmony  
 With mild dominion of warm summer air.

And now I walk in fields of sheathed corn,  
 Sprent with the chamomile and scarlet poppy,  
 Through meads profound with grasses all  
 aflower,  
 And sorrel hanging like a sanguine mist  
 Thwart tender grey horizons leagues away,  
 Broken by cumbrous cumulus of trees ;  
 In coppices where roses float like moons,  
 Breathing warm air we breathe a breath of  
 flowers,  
 Instinct with sunny songs of summer bird,  
 Dartling innumeros intertangling lines  
 From vernal glooms, or sparkling in a spray.

A rugged stile, with upper bar made smooth  
 And polished from how many horny hands  
 Of passing peasant, leads me to a slope  
 That lapses quietly, all pasture land  
 And wood and grain, save where upon my left  
 On level space abides a little church,  
 With golden vane aglister in the sun,  
 Ancient, grey-walled, a pent-roof in dusk tile  
 Rich red and weatherworn upon the tower,  
 A brow that shadows over slumbrous eyes  
 Of narrow window droused with eld and heat.  
 Thither I passed, and came where sleep the  
 dead ;

Stonecrop and moss were on the buttresses,  
 And hart's-tongue sprouted in the creviced  
 wall ;

Over the rude old woodwork of the porch  
 A dial 'mid the crumbling masonry  
 Shadowed the hour.

Upon a sunk headstone  
 Lichened, awry and low, with graven words  
 Worn wavering indefinite with time,  
 A very aged man, mute, motionless.  
 Reclined ; he leaned against another grave  
 That seemed less ancient ; in some withered  
 leaves

His withered limbs were drooping heavily ;  
 His eyes were toward the heavenly distances,  
 Where ever and anon a paler wave  
 Passed over silky grasses of the field,  
 While tracts of land imbibed soft shadowing  
 From clouds that travelled in a gentle wind,  
 Effacing from the sight in yonder valley  
 His sober-vestured cot among the elms,  
 Restored awhile at unawares and still  
 With shining of warm sunlight in the place ;  
 So down to fade faint memories of his mind !

Then I approaching spake, addressing him :  
 " A lovely spot ! often you linger in it ? "  
 Vacant he looked as hearing not the words,  
 Or vaguely conscious of the sense they bore.  
 Then at the moment broke upon the air  
 A laughter of some children from the wood.  
 They came, their tiny hands full filled with  
 flowers ;  
 The boy flung down his nosegay on a grave  
 In eager chase of some blue butterfly ;  
 The little girl for life and ecstasy  
 Twirled, leapt, and gushed with pleasure like  
 a bird.

Then at the sight of these and at the sound,  
 Intelligence lit all the countenance  
 Of the old man ; he gazed and murmured low,  
 " Mine were like these, about the age of  
 these."

These little children straying here to play  
 Seemed like unconscious sunbeams of the  
 Lord

To rouse dim memories in a human soul  
 Where all grew shadow, even as yonder beams  
 Revealed the nested village in the vale ;  
 Yet speedily the darkness closed again.

But now that wicket where I lately passed  
 Clicked and swung open, rendering access  
 To a young man and maiden in their prime ;  
 But he first coming closed and held it shut  
 In sport against her, fastening the latch,  
 Insisting she must mount the neighbour stile  
 And he receive her into stalwart arms ;  
 So, coyly pleading, very soon she did,  
 Both laughing, crooning, and embracing close

When she was landed ; then with faces near,  
 He leaning with his arm about her waist,  
 She yielding fondly, blushing o'er with bliss,  
 These lovers went all bright and beautiful,  
 Threading their way among the grassy graves,  
 Here and there heedless treading over them,  
 Conversing, nor observing him who leaned  
 Upon the headstone facing them the while,  
 That very aged man, nor seeing me.

But once again these human lovers twain  
 Became unconscious sunbeams of the Lord  
 To rouse remembrance in a slumbering soul.  
 He gazed and murmured, " She and I like  
 these

Passed here in other years—the very gate  
 We came by from the village ! this the church  
 Where twelve months after she and I were  
 wed ;

And some few happy years we spent together ;  
 For she was very good—she lies below  
 Here where I sit ; 'tis warm and pleasant  
 here ! "

After, I heard his uneventful tale  
 From others in the village where he dwelt.  
 He tilled these fields, or drove these laden  
 wains,  
 Brown-chested in the sweltering hot summer :  
 Mounted on stacks he forced a long bright  
 blade

Through dense hot hay, then trussed it for  
 the mart ;  
 She came from Orchard, but a mile from  
 hence,  
 Noted for flavour of its teeming apples.

Small store of learning cottagers may boast,  
 Yet well they love their gardens and their  
 homes ;  
 And in their scanty intervals of toil  
 Not all unheard, unheeded doth our mother,  
 Nature, the holy mother of us all,  
 Speak to her children in their heart of hearts.  
 What though ye, Fortune's favourites, may  
 deem  
 Them as the maimed and deaf and dumb and  
 blind

Of Nature's family, will ye profane  
 Presume to map and measure all the love,  
 Trickling through secret channels infinite,  
 Wherein a mother may impart herself,  
 Yearning out most to her unfortunates?  
 They feel her fold, though they can ill explain  
 Aloud with finished phrasing what she means.  
 Ah! not from callous heart or shallow soul,  
 Only from organ helpless with disuse,  
 Their filial love is inarticulate;  
 While you, with your light pity and dull scorn,  
 Flout in them faults your very selves impose,  
 Listless disdaining to alleviate  
 By one least finger-touch the weary load  
 Of doom the Father lays upon the sons,  
 That we may win free range of one another,  
 Nor live unloved in loveless solitude.

Behold these children sporting in the wood,  
 Stooping for flowers, inhaling all the summer!  
 Doth nature never call the little ones,  
 Lay ne'er a tender hand upon their hearts?  
 Behold these lovers when they sit and dream  
 In yonder hollow, with the gambols light  
 Of woodland elves, men name sunshine and  
 shadow,  
 Sliding about them in the fanning breeze,  
 All his clear future roseate with her,  
 And all her future melted into him!  
 Hath nature ne'er a message unto these?  
 Only the world's inhuman votaries,  
 The dead-alive, the arrogant, the cold,  
 Are reprobate exiles and pariahs,  
 Shut out for aye from her maternal heart!  
 Since even the very dead she takes and  
 hides—

Though these may never look upon her face!  
 Deep in her bosom, changing them to flowers  
 And foodful corn, and dear remembrances,  
 Refreshing hallowed life in many a soul,  
 Feeding as meadows feed from secret springs.

And yet 'tis human to lament awhile  
 Over the lapse of man's bewildering life!  
 Nature the mother to this ancient man  
 Called as she calls the little ones to-day;  
 Nature the mother to this ancient man  
 Spake as she speaks to yonder lovers now!

And when the children of himself and her  
 Left them alone, how oft on Sabbath eves,  
 When hymns were silent in the rustic church.  
 He and she came to trim the little graves,  
 To pick germander and forget-me-not,  
 That bloomed about the children laid to sleep!  
 So when she left him verily alone,  
 And he to prayers came wearily without her,  
 When all were gone he knelt upon her sod,  
 Or dreamed with misted eyes in distances  
 Their guileless gaze had visited together.  
 Now sole survivor of his family,  
 Surviving all who loved him, all he loved,  
 Surviving even Love, yea, very Sorrow,  
 Sister to Love, survivor of himself,  
 He sits long summer hours upon the tomb,  
 Her lovely form long faded in the dust,  
 Her name faint wavering from the mossy  
 stone,

Her memory nearly faded from his heart—  
 His heart that loved her—and he little feels  
 Save a mere sense of comfort from the sun  
 About those piteous impotent shrunk limbs.  
 Only when these new shadows of an hour,  
 These children and these lovers, fleeting fly,  
 They rouse a momentary memory,  
 As one designless may awake some sound,  
 Brushing a lyre long disused in dust.

Still Nature speaks as when he was a child,  
 Still speaks as when he was a youthful lover;  
 But these are vanished, yea, the man that was  
 Moulders away; now little but the name  
 Remains of him—these remnants of a man,  
 How shall they heed, all bloodless dull and  
 cold,

Her awful rapture of immortal youth?  
 So all about the stricken wife of Lot,  
 A living woman stiffening to stone,  
 Amid the glare of cities rolled in fire  
 And shocks of thunder subterranean,  
 In loud confusion swept the cavalcade  
 Of urgent richly vested fugitives,  
 Husband and brother, camel-mounted slave,  
 Dwindling in her to murmur meaningless.

The banquet, and the lovely guests of youth  
 With dewy coronal on smooth white brows,

And mirth and song, and goblets of rich wine,  
Have vanished from his soul, and all the  
lights,  
Save only one abortive, piteous  
Fitful illuming dimly storied wall,  
Still struggling with an incubus of Gloom,  
That feeds secure, encroaching evermore,  
Devouring slow the pale remains of life.

Ah! God hath lent to us the loveliest thing  
Of all rare splendours in his treasury,  
And we poor senseless children of a day  
Take it how lightly, toss and trample it,  
Until He whispers, *Give it me again!*  
*Now will I lend it to another life.*  
Then first we look upon the thing we hold,  
And lo! it is the jewel of our youth.  
Ah! then we clutch it with a miser's clutch,  
We peer within it, lift it up to light,  
Search out some golden casket for the gem;  
Turning all cold to hear his awful voice  
Quiet repeating, *Give it me again.*

Behold we dally in a dreamful doze,  
Afloat in listless splendour of a water,  
That loves inhaling glory from fair isles  
Sunnily laving; when we closed our eyes,  
Our boat still floated in its own mild gleam,  
Among white swans and balmy breathing airs;  
Yet now we pale reluctantly to note  
That we have drifted in our summer dream  
All unforeboding among scenes of change:  
Some chilling shadow ruffles the sweet river,  
And troubles clear serenity of heaven.  
We rouse affrighted—lo! the current flies;  
Yonder the shores lie dubious in haze;  
Yonder a cold mist smothers all the stream;  
Pale while we peer, there ominously booms  
From forth the gloom some roaring of a fall!

Arise, my soul! adore the inevitable;  
For Death is that inevitable shadow,  
That ever follows in the ways of life.  
Yea, we who live are needed as we are,  
Nor in aught vary from our destiny;  
And they who die are needed as they are,  
Fulfilling uses more mysterious,  
Yet alike necessary and Divine.

Brothers, arise! leave wails effeminate;  
Confront and praise the inevitable law;  
To-morrow travails with a doom Divine;  
Glory and triumph in Humanity:  
Stand by your guns, make sharp your cut-  
lasses;  
Do battle for the brotherhood of man!

Full soon shall Life with gliding lips Divine  
Blow through a fresher, greener reed than  
ours,  
And fling us to the earth well worn with use.  
So be it, Lord; yea, teach us to rejoice;  
Some human music never shall be mute;  
Yon spheres can roll thee vaster harmonies!  
Yea, if Thou breathe but on a point of dust,  
The same shall thrill and falter into Man;  
Yea, from the clash of systems and of worlds  
Shall flame a superhuman light of souls,  
Innumerable motes from gloom to gloom  
Passing alive in one white beam from Thee!

Nature, refreshed, unwearied, every spring  
Awakes to bodings inarticulate,  
As from a myriad mouths of budding boughs,  
Tuning her instrument, and preluding  
Her full triumphant symphony of summer,  
And autumn's deep tempestuous ocean hymn;  
Her pæan hymeneal of blent lives  
Of sea, and mountain-storm, and swinging  
pine;  
Forest that rings with acclamation rare  
From beast, and bird, and myriad living  
things,  
Tumultuous leaves and ecstasies of bloom;  
With man, a reed through whom the Hidden  
One  
Breathes forth this anthem of the Universe!

Lead then, O year, thy bright procession  
forth,  
Light clouds along cærulean clear skies,  
And revels of fair flowers along the earth,  
Dancing to softest music of mild airs,  
Simmer of rills in sunny summer showers,  
Mingled with flutes and flageolets of birds!  
Roll tides of glory round about our dead,  
Dead in the deep recurrence of thy smile,

Dead in the rhythmic breathing of thy breast !  
 O season ! as with the blare of trumpet-call  
 Shock all the blood of every youthful thing  
 To bound for battle and sublime emprise ;  
 Prick to endeavour, gird us to endure ;  
 Inform with wingèd seeds all ambient airs,  
 Inform all creatures with a hallowed heat,  
 Dissolve them languorous in sweet desire,  
 Yea, flush them full with dear delicious fire !  
 Inform the spiritual air of souls  
 With serviceable knowledge and device,  
 With germs of generous impulse and resolve,  
 With deed the fruit, and fantasy the flower ;  
 Speed the career of human destiny !  
 Abase, O Lord ! vain individual wills ;  
 Our puny aims, our lives ephemeral,  
 Replunge them in thy calm Eternity !  
 We kneel abashed in thine immensity,  
 Who revelled erst within thy light Divine.  
 Still for a few more years insatiate  
 Of living, loving, learning, suffering ;  
 Hungry for all thy wondrous loveliness  
 In earth and air, in woman and in man ;  
 When we are old, or weary and well spent,  
 Letting thy rush of racers thunder by,  
 And cower in thy smile perennial,  
 Draw troubled breath regarding in thy face  
 Of never to be moved serenity—  
 Resume our being, Thou who art alone,  
 And live for ever in the lives of all !

## THE DWELLER IN TWO WORLDS

A MAN stood pondering at twilight hour,  
 Still in the bloom of life's unfaded flower ;  
 Upon a narrow mossy ledge he stood,  
 Starred with some blossoms like to sprinkled  
     blood,  
 Upon a mountain slope precipitous,  
 Gloomy with pines and olive cavernous.  
 Yonder, a stone's throw from him, was a  
     grove  
 Where once the ruined temple proudly throve,  
 Ilex or vine-festooning terebinth  
 Veiling it now from cornice unto plinth.

Deep down a gorge tremendous fronting him,  
 Winding immeasurable, seemed to climb  
 Slow into heaven, all its gloom below  
 Filled with wan clouds, like leagues of  
     mounded snow  
 On rolling upland, densely thronged, and  
     crowned,  
 Where it met heaven beyond the latest mound,  
 With a vast solemn, dusky-crimson sun,  
 Robed round in mist voluminous and wan—  
 Which yet relaxed anon above his head  
 Into a melancholy bloom of red—  
 Grim ramparts pinnacled of ragged stone,  
 Reared either side the vapours lying prone.

Methought I knew no living Sun was there ;  
 Only his phantom in astonished air  
 Rises again, though he hath set and died—  
 As in some rare concurrence may betide.  
 The youth stood dreamily beholding all  
 Bathed in the weird glow funereal,  
 Darkly ensanguined wall of crumbling fane,  
 And tottering pilasters that remain ;  
 A snowy mountain in north-eastern skies ;  
 Cedar and pine in their obscurities.  
 Is it the wind, or any ghostly thing,  
 That talks with these dim boughs low  
     murmuring ?  
 Passing above from darkling tree to tree,  
 That each in turn may whisper secretly  
 His tale of half-articulate despair,  
 Yet find no hope nor absolution there—  
 Fragrant from pine tears and from cedar  
     wood,  
 Yet seems the sultry atmosphere imbued  
 Beside with odour undefinable,  
 Whether of musk or blood I cannot tell—  
 With age-long sheddings from the firs em-  
     browned,  
 And dank with dripping of their boughs, the  
     ground—  
 Murmur sonorous from a torrent far,  
 With plaintive hooting of some owls that are  
 Hid in the forest, more oppressive only  
 Weighs down deep silence on the pilgrim  
     lonely ;  
 While ever and anon there rustles by  
 Some indistinct thing swift and stealthily ;

But whether wolf or jackal by me ran,  
Or somewhat with affinity to man,  
A nameless loathsome presence, my desire  
Led me not then more nearly to inquire—  
No vestige of blest human neighbourhood  
To cheer the solitary where he stood !

And yet I knew a mighty pilgrim host  
Athwart this drear deserted realm had crossed,  
Men, women, children, in full light of day,  
Replete with life, rejoicing in the way !  
But they have gone to other lands from here—  
Nay, not the very travellers that were !  
Hath the red dust, that mingles here so well  
With withered pine-leaves, ne'er a tale to tell ?  
Yea, as in this wise pines and cedars shed  
Their quiet lives, in this wise do the dead  
Of human forests lose their joys and tears,  
Their longings and their fervours and their  
fears !

Later, considering the youth, methought  
He seemed not unfamiliar : I sought  
How this mysterious land's dim denizen  
I should have known ; it dawned upon me  
then

That in the waking world of every day  
The very same in different array  
I had beholden, surely in a mood  
Mating but strangely with such solitude—  
Now in some every-day pursuit immersed ;  
Now among dallying idlers gay dispersed  
On some park-sward ; yet oftener by the gate,  
Where starving men with scowling looks of  
hate

Toil out their lives, he ministers in pain,  
Till he devise the riving of their chain.  
Often when summer air was warm and mild,  
I saw him resting with his wife and child  
Hard by the shadow of a village spire,  
With veering vane that glistened like a fire,  
Where quiet sleep the meek and mossy dead,  
Some simple words of hope above their head.  
They 'mid ripe orchards of their numble croft  
Reposing on the grass beheld aloft  
How round the leaves and mellowing apples  
ran

A luscious glory, warm, cærulean.

I marvelled much if this indeed were he,  
The lover of a sweet tranquillity !  
Yet I remembering noting with surprise  
His sudden gleam of visionary eyes,  
As of a soul transported elsewhere,  
Even from the heart of common wonted care,  
Or from the haven of a home most fair.

Alas ! alas ! he was no demon foul ;  
But a poor mortal sprighted with a soul  
Bisexual, conflicting ; nay, with two—  
One childlike and affectionate that grew  
Rooted a creeper clinging round a home ;  
And one a restless spirit prone to roam  
In far forbidden lands mysterious,  
Dear unto haughty moods adventurous—  
Thin airs where eagle-reason loves to breathe,  
Which to the feeble and timorous were death ;  
Ideal realms more glorious than day,  
Where lovely visions falter from decay  
With waving wand of wizard fantasy :  
Awful forbidden regions of the dead,  
Where wild lost souls of living men have fled  
To cast them on the violated floors  
Of gods reviled and disinherited,  
Where life o'er dusky stains new crimson  
pours,  
While each lost soul delirious implores  
For violent sinful joys the gods can give,  
In these to agonise, then cease to live.  
These are the haunts of that perturbed sprite.  
Who will not bend him to a tame delight.  
Yea, for the ghost of some of ancient time  
Lingered until it entered into him.  
While oft with tears the tender soul implores,  
A troubled spirit wafts him from the doors  
Into yon fascinating solitudes ;  
Though often here a formless fear intrudes.  
Lest, if he slide upon the slope too rash,  
He whelm his well-belovèd in the crash.

Ah ! ye who sit in winter by the fire  
About your old hearthstone, nor feel desire  
To wander from it, do not curse your child  
Gone with unquiet spirits of the wild,  
Who sits no longer with you—pray for him,  
And weep ! for when the window-pane grew  
dim

With rain flung flying from a maniac blast,  
 Did ye behold a scared white face that passed,  
 Yet peered a moment out of the wild weather  
 Into the warm glow where ye rest together?  
 That was your lost one wistfully beholding  
 The quiet faith of your serene enfolding!  
 If God hath gifted you with hallowed ease,  
 Think ye He hath no care for such as these?  
 He leads unseen lone feelers after truth;  
 On all blind blown wayfarers hath He ruth!

Yea, God inhabiteth both hell and heaven,  
 Love in the maybeam, Fury in the levin;  
 From steadfast suns He squandereth life and  
 light,  
 In death's pale mask He scattereth them by  
 night;  
 Peals in the hallelujah of a saint,  
 Raves in a rebel's blasphemous complaint,—  
 Yet art Thou holy before whom we fall,  
 Profound Unnamed who reconcilest all!

Behold! the temple seemed as though on  
 fire,  
 While heaven glowed as from a burning  
 pyre.  
 Suddenly shadow muffled noiselessly  
 All feet of rocks and pines and cedars  
 nigh:  
 Then o'er that mouldered cornice which im-  
 pends  
 Over the huge stones of the wall ascends  
 A fringe of very flame, that grows more  
 large,  
 Silently soft expanding on the marge,  
 Till imaged like a huge new-risen moon,  
 Ruddy it rests upon the temple soon.

Then in the mystic luminous new night,  
 One of those prowling things, I with affright  
 Had noted nigh, now paused in its career,  
 Rising upon two legs, a shape of fear;  
 Shaggy and clumsy, with half human face,  
 And filthy gesture pointing to a place  
 Behind the temple, where I now beheld  
 Laurel and cypress, while among them welled  
 Waters delightful, bubbling, musical,  
 And a more soul-dissolving madrigal

From bulbul amorous among myrtle blooms;  
 There over grove and emerald sward there  
 looms,  
 As from the temple, enkindling mist of myrrh,  
 Mingling with liquid lute and dulcimer.

Yet lo! a scene unnoted earlier—  
 For look, beneath yon inner ruin wall,  
 Shadowed till now, the moon a spectacle  
 Most hideous reveals—an altar square  
 Of massy stone, and over it a bare  
 Obscene grey idol, phallic, horrible,  
 Collared and braceleted with carbuncle.  
 Beneath, upon the horizontal stone  
 A human body beautiful lay prone,  
 A body of ideal-moulded youth—  
 Weep, holier lovers, o'er her in your ruth!  
 Her lower limbs, yet warm, hung helplessly  
 Over the verge; along the ivory  
 I saw a slender rill of crimson glide  
 From a small gash within her tender side.

Stands, crimson-robed, the sacrificial priest,  
 And gloats upon her form, as on a feast  
 For eyes that seem to smoulder and to smoke  
 With lust unglutted in the slaughter-stroke.  
 A gleaming gory knife is in his hand;  
 He wears on features, noble once, the brand,  
 Like a fallen angel, of the wrath of God,  
 All lightning-scarred; his vitals are the food  
 Of an undying worm; once golden hair  
 Hangs disarrayed; his colour once most fair  
 Shows deadly livid; one may note the drip  
 Of sanguine horror slowly down his lip;  
 Hatred and scorn writhe ever there awake.  
 Like some foul life of convoluted snake.

In these dread natures dwells no rivalry  
 Of two strong souls that grapple unto death:  
 One only reigned since these have drawn a  
 breath;  
 Or else one soul hath proved so powerful,  
 There lives none now to challenge the dark  
 rule  
 Of that usurper; never anxious care  
 Possesses them for other men's despair,  
 Lest weaker lives be trampled in the crush  
 Where eagerly for ends of ours we push;

Their sweetest music is a victim's moan ;  
 With breaths of dying men they feed their own.  
 Never they sweep the infinite of time,  
 Wistfully peering for a hope sublime ;  
 They scorn the innocence of kindly ties,  
 And common cares, and pure felicities ;  
 For them no heaven of love, nor sacrifice  
 Of heroes for a cause ; their halls of ice  
 Sunder from human sympathy ; they dwell  
 Palaced alone in flame unquenchable,  
 A prison gorgeous, whose walls of fire  
 Are fed and fuelled with insane desire !

Alas ! my pilgrim's gaze appeared to range  
 O'er all the scene with fascination strange.  
 Yet hearken ! what new message floats from far,  
 Melodious from where the living are ?  
 'Tis like a peal of mellow village bells,  
 With muffled interval, that sweetly wells,  
 While early memories of childish times  
 Answer the faint pulsation of the chimes.  
 Mother and sister tender tones have twined  
 With that old hallowed music in the wind,  
 Even as one may send a loving word  
 Nestled within the plumage of a bird.  
 He dimly hears them pleading by the cross,  
 " O Jesus, save him from an utter loss !"  
 He dimly sees them kneeling, earnest, mild,  
 There where he worshipped with them when  
 a child.

He vacillates upon the slope of fear  
 With misted eyes ; but louder and more near  
 Strains of the revel captivate the ear,  
 And still he moves ;—yet speedily methought  
 Yon bells with lovelier melody were fraught ;  
 For now they ring a hymeneal peal,  
 And ringing to his bleeding heart reveal  
 A vision of a childlike woman crowned  
 With orange-blossom, beaming o'er a ground  
 Children have strewn with lilies and with roses,  
 While she, serenely confident, reposes  
 On a man's arm, who leads her from the  
 porch—  
 He knows himself, he knows the village  
 church !

Innocent hymnals of the children call  
 Vengeance upon him if he let her fall !

Winged with miraculous anguish of her  
 love,  
 Even through shadows of this alien grove  
 An image of herself appears to move  
 With streaming eyes and long dishevelled hair  
 Imploring, and she brings their infant fair.  
 O then he paused, reaching a hand to  
 grasp  
 The hand that, woe is me ! it cannot clasp,—  
 Vision adored and holy, yet a vision !

But shouts of laughter pealed as in derision  
 Clear from the revel ; clash of dulcimer,  
 Mingled with ravishment of musk and myrrh,  
 And lute and marrying music from below,  
 Swam cloudlike o'er him ; in the glimmering  
 grove,  
 Rained on with roses, youths and maidens  
 move,  
 All blooming with a rare voluptuous bloom ;  
 Now languidly they glow athwart the gloom,  
 Dissolved with breathing some narcotic fume,  
 In pliant somnolence of yielding grace  
 Faintly repelling many a lewd embrace  
 Of things half-brute, half-man, that wind  
 among  
 The bare-limbed mazes of their foam-white  
 throng.  
 Now, like a smouldering fire that springs to  
 flame  
 With a libation of poured oil, the tame  
 Assemblage, unaware to frenzy stung,  
 Bacchanals bounded, reeled, and kissed, and  
 clung !  
 Slowly, more swiftly, see the pilgrim move,  
 Until his feet seem flying to the grove !  
 Lust, loathly monster, fiercely folds him  
 round :  
 And on the scene there falls a night pro-  
 found. . . .

. . . Silence : anon a mighty storm arose  
 Oceanlike in the pines uproarious.  
 Their haughty heads all agonizing swayed ;  
 They wailed, and rent, and wrestled, sore  
 afraid,  
 Till in a lull methought I was aware  
 Of wings that clanged innumerable in air

Assembling, of a trample and a crash :  
Then, in an awful livid lightning flash,  
A myriad bounding bristling backs I viewed  
Horribly hustling, crashing through the  
wood ;

And peals of mocking diabolic laughter  
Clutched at my heart in closely following  
after.

All the black forest, cliff and cleft and peak,  
Reiterated that infernal shriek,  
Rebounding and rebellowing for ever :  
Hearing such hell's glee hardest hearts may  
shiver :

Flash followed flash ; among those hoofs  
obscene

Lay the white form of him who once had been  
Pure, happy, generous, of kingly mind :  
May they be hoofs of fiend, or human kind ?

For cruel moral jubilations fall  
From men when off its lonely pedestal  
Genius tumbles with a loud undoing :  
Maniacal they leap in his warm ruin !

Lo ! pines colossal cumbered with the snow,  
Heavily falling from rent members now,  
Or skeleton trees of humid shrouded head,  
With lank grey parasitic growth long dead.  
Above, the forest mounteth stern and steep,  
Where in a boulder-chaos cataracts leap,  
Resounding in the abyss a muffled thunder.  
Behold ! where livid icy seas up yonder  
Stare from a sterile snow ; but higher yet  
Huge solid flamelike crag with many a jet  
Springs in the vaporous void : it glares a vast  
Condor abnormal in the storm aghast,  
With many a ragged neck and baldest pate,  
Scarred from remorseless torturing of Fate.  
O grand Promethean visage marred with  
fire,

Hail, flood and frost, and blasts that never  
tire,  
Power's agelong insult ! dost thou still  
aspire ?

Lo ! now the dazzling violet serpents dart  
To maim your grandeur ! and you cleave  
apart :

Hark ! how stone tears do ponderously roll  
Down the torn flank—so slides a human soul

Little by little, grates and lingers, holds,  
Falls ; bounding clutches at some awful  
folds

Of God's precipitous drear robe, and falls,  
And crashing to perdition all around appals !  
The spectral brotherhood of mountains round  
From one to another toss the terrible  
sound ;

And after murmurous pause the wrack be-  
guiles

Some hoar mount, far a desolate hundred  
miles,

Out of his wintry swound to answer slow,  
Moaning a baffled human soul laid low. . . .

Then, save for solemn sound of waterfalls,  
And sobbing wind subsiding, nothing calls :  
Over the marred white youth snow softly  
silent falls.

Yea, silence shed a healing chrism around :  
Then lifting heavy eyes that sought the  
ground,

I saw cloud-phantoms pale confusedly.  
Bewraying presence of a light on high.  
Till unaware they stilly rend asunder,  
Revealing a fair Empyrean wonder.  
A snowy peak illumines a violet air,  
And a clear star serene reposes there,  
Darting all colours : surely all is well !  
Doth not the crimson sparkle shoot from  
Hell ?

Last, while the clouds from all the mount  
were torn,

In desolate lower roots of it a horn  
Resounded harsh and loud : but higher  
rocks

Multiplied into more ethereal shocks  
Of melody the sound, which as it passed  
To loftier shining regions ever amassed  
A more ideal spiritual tone ;  
Till, like a delicate subtle flame, it won  
Its way to yonder battlements of ice,  
Exhaling there in silver paradise,  
As from some luminous aerial places,  
And sweet serenely-modulated faces ;  
Dissolving now, an overblown faint flower,  
Into a perfumed stillness evermore.

## "THE PITY OF IT"

IF our love may fail, Lily,  
 If our love may fail,  
 What will mere life avail, Lily,  
 Mere life avail?

Seed that promised blossom,  
 Withered in the mould !  
 Pale petals overblowing,  
 Failing from the gold !

When the fervent fingers  
 Listlessly enclose,  
 May the life that lingers  
 Find repose, Lily,  
 Find repose !

Who may dream of all the music  
 Only a lover hears,  
 Harkening to hearts triumphant  
 Bearing down the years ?  
 Ah ! may eternal anthems dwindle  
 To a low sound of tears ?

Room in all the ages  
 For our love to grow,  
 Prayers of both demanded  
 A little while ago :

And now a few poor moments,  
 Between life and death,  
 May be proven all too ample  
 For love's breath !

Seed that promised blossom,  
 Withered in the mould !  
 Pale petals overblowing,  
 Failing from the gold !

I well believe the fault lay  
 More with me than you,  
 But I feel the shadow closing  
 Cold about us two.

An hour may yet be yielded us,  
 Or a very little more—  
 Then a few tears, and silence  
 For evermore, Lily,  
 For evermore !

## A SONG AT A WATERFALL

ATHWART the voice of a wild water,  
 Falling for ever,  
 Do I hear some song of the foam's daughter  
 Fairly quiver ?

Is it song of a naiad, or bee,  
 Or a breeze from the tree,  
 Haunting the cave of the wild water ?

For evermore leapeth the fall plashing  
 Into a pool,  
 And nigh me, away from the foam flashing,  
 Quiet and cool  
 Lies a hyaline gulf olive-green,  
 Where ferns overlean,  
 And boughs embower the wave washing.

In a clear hyaline, lo ! the leaves waver,  
 While, as a cloud,  
 Stones below melt in the pool-quaver :  
 And with the loud  
 Shout of the waters blithe  
 Mingles, airy and lithe,  
 A tune, like a lingering flavour-savour,

Fearless fronteth the sound-ocean,  
 Even as a bird  
 Breasting the resonant storm-motion :  
 Low is it heard,  
 Sundering soft the cold  
 Roar, like a gleam of gold,  
 Wandering warm with a mild motion :

Visiting every flower blossom,  
 A humming-bird ;  
 Floats and falls on the wind's bosom  
 Many a word.  
 'Tis ne'er a naiad who sings,  
 Nor aught with wings,  
 But a maiden fair as the foam blossom !

For now, disentangling the tree-cover,  
 Resteth she fair  
 On a stone, a mere child ; and her own lover,  
 All unaware  
 Of a heaven in her, laughs free ;  
 While blithe as a bee  
 Singing she roameth the world over.

Ah ! sweeter far than the fall roaring,  
 Or any wild sound,  
 Is the carol of thy young life pouring  
 Joyance around !  
 Yet a vanishing voice of the spring,  
 With a fleeting wing,  
 Is thine in the realm of the long roaring !  
 For the bee will go from the wild water,  
 With blossom and breeze ;  
 And thou, more fair than the foam's daughter.  
 Even as these,  
 Wilt fade with the hours away  
 From the weary play,  
 And the wildering roar of the wild water !

## ERIC : A DIRGE

ERIC, the beautiful, is gone to sleep :  
 Soft, lest he wake !  
 Eric, thy slumber is so very deep,  
 We may not ruffle it, howe'er we weep,  
 Never awake thee !  
 Morning, the beautiful, will soon arise  
 Out of her sleep,  
 Feel for the dawn of thine auroral eyes  
 Answering hers ; nay, thou wilt not arise,  
 Whoever weep thee !  
 Thy mother tearless kneels beside her boy :  
 Eric, awake !  
 Thy sisters fading, thou wert all her joy :  
 Eric, thou vanishest, her last, her boy :  
 Let her awake thee !  
 We yield thee to the tender earth to-morrow,  
 Eric, my love :  
 Lo ! how the wind wails ! ours are wrong  
 and sorrow :  
 No fear, nor sin, nor storm, to-day, to-  
 morrow,  
 Nor ever move thee !  
 I would be with thee by the warm South Sea,  
 Lulled into rest !  
 Yet the world-soul abideth even with me,  
 Here in the life-storm, whose dim anarchy  
 May ne'er molest thee !

Eric, my beautiful, lie thou asleep,  
 Vanishing blossom !  
 Our mystic Mother will inviolate keep  
 Thee with her buried seeds, until ye leap  
 Blithe from her bosom !

## A LADY TO A LOVER

IF the sun low down in the West, my friend,  
 Filled earth with fiery wine,  
 If a hand were on my breast, my friend,  
 And lips were laid on mine,  
 And we together  
 In summer weather  
 Lay in a leafy dell,  
 Could the weariness,  
 Or the long distress,  
 Or any fiends from hell,  
 Wipe out that hour of rest, my friend,  
 And the rapture all divine ?  
 Then if thy blade were buried deep  
 Within this heart of mine,  
 From the warm whiteness fierce would leap  
 My fiery blood like wine ;  
 Earth all about the West, my friend,  
 After orgies of rich wine,  
 Wan lying in the sun's decline,  
 And I in arms of thine, my friend,  
 In dying arms of thine !

A SICK MOTHER TO HER  
BLIND CHILD

O MY love-laden  
 Own little maiden,  
 Though it is night to thee,  
 Yet is it light to me.  
 Sweetly appealing,  
 Movest thou feeling  
 All the way nigh to me,  
 Me who can see.  
 I may not fly to thee,  
 Only reply to thee,  
 Asking of me,

"Pray, mother, teach me  
How I may reach thee!"  
Only come merrily:  
Feel the way cheerily!  
A little more prayerful  
Faltering careful  
Surely will bring to me,  
Lead thee to rest:  
Then shalt thou cling to me,  
And I will sing to thee,  
Laid on my breast!

### WAR: 1870-1

#### CHRIST

OF all portrayals of the Son of Man  
I love the dim portrayal at Milan,  
Where among those few friends He sits apart,  
With the burden of a world upon his heart.  
The Man of Sorrows! doth He year by year  
Fade from the world's heart, as He fades  
from here?

Ah! but the sorrow, the sorrow will not fade,  
Though the Consoler in the grave be laid!  
Doth He not seem rather to make long pause  
In this dim place, waiting until his cause  
Triumph at last, yet evermore to fade  
Under this agelong disappointment laid  
On Him, because the victory is delayed?  
Hence the mute woe his countenance yet  
wears:

"Is it not more than eighteen hundred years?  
And still I see my children bathed in tears;  
Still with their greed for gain, their lust for  
power,

Men in high places do my little ones devour.  
Was it for nought the life of loneliness,  
Lacerate all with alien distress;  
This tenderest heart of me, the human lover,  
Wrung for men's cruel selfishness all over?  
Was it for nought the unutterable agony  
Among those olives of Gethsemane?  
For nought that hour supreme upon the cross,  
When all the desolation of their loss  
Rose a wan cloud before me, dying alone,  
Hiding the Father even from the Son?

Yet in the end, 'It is finished!' was my cry,  
Yielding my spirit how confidingly  
Into his hands, because I knew that He  
Would yield my holy, happy kingdom birth,  
For which my heart was broken upon earth."

#### SIEGE

Maternal veins unnourished may yield  
them now no more  
Their needful food, and they are carried  
from the door,  
Cold in little coffins, fresh flowers in their  
breast,  
With pale, starved mothers giving thanks  
that they are gone to rest.  
Last Christmas eve a father talked with such  
a mother  
Of how next year their youngest born, the  
tiny baby brother,  
Would be ready, like his sister now, to have  
the tiny shoes  
Put out before the nursery door, as little  
children use;  
To be filled with dainty trifles, tokens of  
parental love,  
Which are innocently feigned to be mys-  
terious treasure-trove,  
Brought while they sleep for babes by Jesus,  
holy child above.  
Alas! before this Christmas came, the merry  
girl and boy  
Both vanished from the humble hearth; and  
all the mother's joy  
Dwindled into a laying wreaths on each  
fresh-mounded grave,  
Hoping that she may join them soon, and  
her slaughtered soldier brave.

#### RULERS

Ye who prefer loud claim to lead mankind,  
Those armies labouring ever weary and blind!  
When they have seemed to win some miles  
of way  
For all their errors and circuitous delay,  
For all long anguish of their multitude,  
And piteous bones of impotent heroes strewed

Along the ages, is it a light thing ye  
Would thrust them backward many a century?  
Is it a small thing ye have nursed the fire  
Malign of blind inherited desire,  
If so ye may reinstate Fraud with Force  
On their old thrones, and miserable man  
divorce

From life, from light, from Liberty the bride,  
A holy love, and a celestial guide?

Ye trouble our slowly clearing airs of Peace,  
Lest in the strengthening sunlight may  
increase

Shy human happiness, and men mature release  
From shameful fume-fed slumbers ye impose,  
That human souls may grovel for you, your  
pillows of repose!

Behold the vessel of Human Destiny,  
A hull dismasted, flounders pitifully!  
Though on a foaming sea by night she drift,  
A few pale stars fly hurrying in the rift,  
And she floats onward: lo! some sheltering  
port

Hath lit the beacon: here may she resort  
Awhile; she hails the light—she grates the  
rock—

And shuddering staggers shattered with the  
shock!

Ye, ye, the wreckers, lit your specious lie  
To lure lost men to this extremity!

Now, like infernal fiends, ye scour the shore,  
To plunder and slay the drowning 'mid the  
roar:

Some shall escape your treacherous royal  
hands,

And sail anew, and find the far-off lands:  
Shall not their fierce free children yet embrace  
Their hands, crowned pirates! in the blood  
of you?

A moment only front the fearful sight:  
Do not all angels, shrinking with affright,  
Turn from our world their wounded heavenly  
faces,

To find in stars remote more hopeful dwelling-  
places,

Where never sound may reach them more  
from our lost, ruined races? . . .

. . . An Empire floats a banner.  
Sable and white and red,  
Dyed with ravine and famine and plague,  
And blood of the innocent dead:  
Black with pestilence, white with famine, red  
with the innocent dead!

#### FRANC-TIREURS

I see three boys of very tender years,  
Shoeless and ragged, trembling, shedding  
tears,

Hurried along by a ferocious guard  
Of foreign soldiers to their meet reward.  
Are they not criminals of deepest dye?  
These have arisen for hearth and family!  
'Tis wan cold morning: hark! the musket  
rattle:

These murdered innocents are not slain in  
battle!

I do not love to hear a gentle hare  
Scream when, arising from her flowery lair,  
The sportsman wounds her with his cruel gun,  
And the wood crimsons wheresoe'er she run:  
Yet less endure to view the barrels gleam  
Yonder, to hear the sickening human scream  
Of those three patriot children biting dust,  
While agonising forest boughs are thrust  
Athwart the glare of a red rising sun,  
As they would hide from him the dastard  
infamy done!

Under some trees not very far from there  
Lies an old man with soiled silver hair:

Here all alone the patriot fired for France  
Upon the foe; two strive to wrench the lance,  
Wherewith they have bored him, from the  
frame that quivers:

Yet see in very labour of death he shivers  
With his good gun the German skull of one!  
Four more fierce bullets, ere the work be  
done,

In blundering fury must the hordes dis-  
charge,

Ere they may set this rampant soul at large,  
The formidable tortured ghost within,  
Which all in darkening smiles upon the sin,  
That shall be wrought for vengeance in Berlin!

## THE VILLAGE

Rests on the meek head of a pastoral hill  
 A village whence, when summer skies are still,  
 You see a lapse of wandering silver glance  
 Near and afar among fair meads of France,  
 Along her poplar-lines and pasture-lands;  
 Here in the hamlet many a cottage stands,  
 The little all of simple country folk,  
 Who sow the seasonable seed, who yoke  
 Slow oxen to the ploughs or laden wains,  
 Who bind in sheaves the mellow, foodful  
 grains.

Here in their native soil their lives are rooted,  
 Like their own trees all rosy and purple  
 fruited:

To them their humble church is heaven on  
 earth;

The hoary priest received them at their birth  
 Into the world, God's minister, and he,  
 Their friend through life, at the end of life  
 will be

Their angel, smoothing all the perilous way  
 Into the realms of everlasting Day.

Under a bowered porch on summer eves  
 Knits a blithe housewife, while among the  
 leaves

Of pleasant orchards near two children laugh,  
 Pierrot and Marie; in the swing they quaff  
 Delightful breezes, and the father hears,  
 Returning 'mid the simmering barley ears.

Alas! their village feels the winter snow  
 Soiled, thawing, whitening her roadway now;  
 And round her walls chill winds of winter  
 blow.

Around her walls! ah! gazer, what of these?  
 They are more pitcous than leafless trees!  
 Ruins unroofed, begrimed with flame and  
 smoke,

On either side the one wide way invoke  
 With dumb, unconscious eloquence of woe  
 His pity, who knew them three brief moons  
 ago:

Dreary from forth a dreary mist they loom,  
 Each, as he nears them, silent with one doom,  
 A cheery home, now wrecked and tenantless,  
 Like a marred face grown vacant with distress.

Yet hearken! there are cries upon the air—  
 Pause, lover of our race, pause, and despair!  
 Where lately bloomed a garden full of flowers,  
 On the wet, trampled ground a woman cowers;  
 A woman with a baby at her breast  
 Weeps with low wailing: chin upon his chest,  
 With folded arms the man against a wall  
 In moody silence leans; from forth a pall  
 Of snow three rudely-carven wooden crosses  
 Mark in yon field where moulder many  
 corpses:

There waved a harvest! yet befouled in mire  
 Sweet human food lies, where the hosts of  
 fire

Went devastating with remorseless tramp:  
 Yonder thin snows are thawing; all the  
 damp

Earth has been torn to many a ragged pit,  
 Where each fire-entrained, moaning, mangling  
 bolt alt.

Two children in the neighbouring orchard go;  
 Yet young full meaning of their loss to know,  
 But solemnised with all their elders' woe  
 And all the melancholy scene, they try  
 Among charred fruits and branches to descry  
 Where hung so lately their own favourite  
 swing,

Finding, poor babes! a pleasure in wondering.  
 Not now one views the river glancing far  
 Among fair meadows, like a scimitar;  
 But nearer, over sodden, sullen soil,  
 Somewhat, like one interminable toil  
 Of worm uncoiling, dusk, appears to wind  
 Slow through the mist, impalpably defined,  
 Along a hedgerow line, obscure and dank:  
 It is the serried foeman's cruel crawling rank!

## SEDAN

The looms are broken, the looms are hushed,  
 And a broken, weary man  
 Sits near a child, with fever flushed,  
 In a cottage of Sedan.

The mother starved with him, the weaver,  
 To feed their little child,  
 Who lies now low with famine fever,  
 That slew the mother mild.

The room is desolate ; the store  
Has dwindled very low ;  
All a poor housewife's pride of yore  
Was plundered of the foe.

And a father cowers over grey  
Wood-ashes barely warm ;  
He feels the child is going away  
In the pitiless, pale storm.

He knows an emperor lost a crown  
Here in his own Sedan ;  
And he knows an emperor gained a crown,  
The solitary man.

He hears the voice of a world that sings  
The spectacle sublime ;  
Yet only heeds one life that clings  
To his own a little time !

I wonder, if the Christ beholds  
With eyes divinely deep,  
Whom to his heart He nearest holds,  
The kings, or these that weep ?

Who seem more royal and more tall  
In calm, pure light from God,  
These crowned colossal things that crawl,  
Or lowly souls they trod ?

These purple, laurelled kings we hail  
With banner and battle-blare,  
Or him who writhes beneath their trail.  
A pauper in despair ;  
Conquered and conquerors of Sedan,  
Or a dying child and a starving man ?

#### THE WOUNDED

In one dim church, after a bloody fray,  
Lie wounded men with swathed limbs, and  
grey.

Wan, fainting faces, down the solemn nave :  
Women are ministering all they crave,  
Sisters of Mercy, daughters of the Lord !  
Many will die, for all they may afford  
Of refuge ; though the healers with sharp pain  
Have striven to heal them, all will be in vain !

Feebly in sinking cling their hearts to some  
Afar, who wait them in a beloved home,  
Who with pale cheek, with blanchèd, quivering  
lips

Will tear the letter dim with life's eclipse.  
Mournful the sufferers that eve foresee,  
Not far from now, when dear ones with a tree,  
There in the fatherland, in Germany,  
Glistering toys and trinkets will entwine ;  
With twigs of fir, where coloured tapers fine  
Glisten less lovely than the children's eyes,  
Who with sweet exclamations of surprise  
Find out new blisses ; widows worn the while  
Melting a rising sob into a smile :  
For well they know that, lying yonder, he,  
On whom the nightly snow falls quietly,  
Would love to feel their little mutual treasure  
Passed even this Christmas with an all un-  
clouded pleasure !

Ah ! but the church—it is a ghastly scene :  
Consoling ministers of mercy lean  
Over confused shapes by candle gleam :  
These have rent clothing soiled, with dull  
red stream  
Of ebbing life discoloured ; while some die  
In silence, others with a tortured cry  
Rend the foul air : yet others near the door,  
A variegated medley, strew the floor  
(Teuton with Frank, turban with helmet blent,  
In diverse garb and war-accountrement),  
Conversing, grimed with battle smoke, and  
dust  
Of toilsome march ; they munch the wheaten  
crust,

Or moodily exhale a soothing mist,  
Or drink from glimmering metal as they list.  
But yonder, over the faint sufferers,  
Half in dim shining, half in shadow, stirs  
With wandering wind some painted canvas,  
torn

In that blind havoc of mad battle born :  
Surely it is the Sufferer Divine  
Upon the cross ! while under Him recline  
These last inheritors of agony.  
Behold, the piteous portraiture on high  
Hath in that very heart of Christ a rent,  
That tells of where one erring bullet went !

## A VISION OF WAR

I stood by night upon a reeking plain  
 Among stark, stiffened hecatombs of slain,  
 Who blankly stare into the sullen skies  
 With glassy, sightless, widely-open eyes.  
 The night was moonless, dense with storm-  
 ful cloud,

And muffled all, nor aught to sight allowed,  
 Save in large livid lightning's ghastly glare  
 Over the dead men with their awful stare.  
 Upon a rising ground some ruins riven  
 Of a burnt village, whence the dwellers driven  
 Fled from a ravening fire with ne'er a home,  
 Stand in the cold flame desolate and dumb.  
 Some curl in attitudes of mortal anguish;  
 Some with a burning thirst low moaning  
 languish

In their own life-blood, helpless underneath  
 A heavy horror that hath ceased to breathe.  
 This form that feels hath hair and beard of  
 grey;

The overlying corse fair curls, but they  
 Are marred with crimson: this was a fair boy,  
 Stay of a widowed mother and her joy;  
 A tender girl awaits the comely youth,  
 To whom is plighted a pure maiden troth—  
 These two, late locked in a death-grapple wild,  
 Might they not be a father and his child,  
 Lying together very still and mild?  
 While many a fearful, formless, mangled  
 thing,

That once was human, blends with littering  
 Of tumbril-wheel, of cannon-carriage wrack,  
 Rifle with sword, and soldier's haversack.

But what are these portentous Phantoms tall,  
 That rise before my spirit to appal?  
 One rides upon a pale colossal horse  
 Which, with its head low, sniffs before a corse,  
 And shakes with terror: but the Rider swart,  
 Of supernatural height, of regal port,  
 Inhales the tainted air with nostrils wide,  
 And face hard set in a right royal pride.  
 One strong, red hand a blade that he has  
 bathed

In a warm, living heart, holds reeking;  
 swathed

With giant folds imperially red  
 His huge, mailed body; on his grizzly head  
 A brazen helm; he dark surveys the dead;  
 Dilate with cruel, unwholesome arrogance  
 The dictatorial form, the countenance  
 Swollen with glutton vengeance; things un-  
 sweet

As fumes that bloat yon corpses at his feet.  
 Whence hath the robe drunk purple? there  
 is hung

A collar of torn hearts that he hath wrung  
 About his neck, for royal collar slung;  
 Chains of wrought gold that blaze with many  
 a gem

In snaky twine contorted over them:  
 His martial plume, a swath of foodless grain,  
 Trodden, or scorched, or sodden with late  
 rain.

Tear-blotted letters from far homes are  
 strewn

Under his horse-hoofs, or inanimate blown  
 Of gusty winds, the words upon them traced  
 Well nigh, like lives of those who wrote,  
 effaced.

He looks the incarnation of old War,  
 Resembling an imperial Conqueror.

Low thunder with rare intermission growled,  
 Wherein were mingled cries of wolves that  
 howled.

I saw one straining, gaunt and fiery-eyed,  
 Held by the King in leash; whose awful side  
 It sprang anon away from, fiercely hounded;  
 And woe is me! who witnessed where it  
 bounded.

A little child in sad astonishment  
 I had beheld, who with a woman went:  
 She sought distracted on the fearful plain  
 One special soldier among all the slain:  
 That famished wolf was hounded on the pair;  
 And with fire-fangs it healed a lorn despair!

An Empire floats a banner,  
 Sable and white and red,  
 Dyed with ravine and famine and plague  
 And blood of the innocent dead;  
 Black with ravine,  
 White with famine,  
 Red with the innocent dead!

Yet a more hideous Phantom than the other  
Leaned on the War-shape, like its own twin  
brother.

A wan blue mist it seemed to emanate  
From where the dead most thickly congregated;

A crawling exhalation, yet anon  
A lank, tall body with the graveclothes on.  
It trailed and sloped o'er many miles of dead,  
Until it reached with a most fearful head  
The bosom of the Warrior on the horse;  
There leaned, fraternal, like a month-old corpse;  
Nay, somewhat otherwise: rather methought  
It wore aspect like one most loathsome,  
fraught

With such disease as by beleaguered Metz  
Some saw who passed among the lazarettes.  
Surely this was incarnate Pestilence!  
Yet, as I shrank with shuddering from hence,  
It wore a face pale History shall remember  
For his who slew his country one December.  
He holds in skeleton semblance of a hand  
A distaff broken, for symbol of command.

Not the eagle, but the vulture  
Wheels above him, screaming now,  
"I will yield my foul sepulture  
To the murdered men below!"  
Hoarsely croaks a carrion crow,  
"Thou wert as a Pestilence:  
Rot abhorred in impotence!"

#### THE ROSES OF BAZEILLES<sup>1</sup>

Do the roses bloom, roses bloom  
In lost Bazeilles,  
Where shrilled a terrible human wail  
In the blasting blaze of a living tomb?  
There they bloom  
In lost Bazeilles!

Where men, like fiends, with frenzy fraught,  
In a fiery street,  
In a whirl of bullets and flaming sleet,

<sup>1</sup> According to a letter from Mr. Bullock, in the *Daily News*, when he visited Bazeilles a month or two after the burning, roses were blooming there.

In a welter of falling ruin fought,  
While women sought  
With wavering feet,  
Scared children clutching close their dress,  
Babes in their arms,  
Wildly to fly from hell's alarms!  
Who if they 'scaped the seething press  
Of murdering swarms,  
Felt fiercer harms—  
A horrible doom of scorching breath  
From flame that clung,  
To mother and child devouring hung,  
Till all fell smouldering, heaped in death,—  
Charred heaps of death  
Encumbering flung!

May roses bloom, roses bloom  
In lost Bazeilles?  
Where flame, to stifle the human wail,  
Leapt, fuming, roaring over the doom  
Of a living tomb,  
And the sun turned pale  
Over lost Bazeilles!

Yea, roses blow, roses blow,  
White rose with red,  
From yon charred fragments of the dead,  
Crumbling chaos of friend and foe,  
In a burnt-out woe,  
With ruin fed!

A rose shall blow, roses blow  
In the heart of France,  
Though demons in their orgies dance,  
And a hectoring, insolent, rude foe  
Insult with a blow  
Vanquished France!

Red rose of valour, rose of truth  
And of purity,  
Deep-bosomed rose of integrity,  
Sweet white rose of innocent youth,  
A celestial growth,  
Bloom holily!

Rose shall be rife, roses blow rife  
From a fallen throne,  
Under whose shadowy shame lay prone

Nerveless a nation's nobler life;  
 From manful spiritual strife,  
 From healthful use of stalwart limbs,  
 Wherewith a soul or body climbs,  
 Debarred: her stronger sons in chains,  
 A slow-souled vampire drained her veins:  
 Pampered with shows and shames she lay,  
 Poured out until this earth-convulsing day:  
 Then with the shock,  
 That made her throne to rock,  
 She rose dishevelled from her gory clay!

France lies in ashes: the nations pale  
 Behold dismayed  
 Over the earth an awful shade:  
 Tyranny stalks in feudal mail  
 O'er hearts that fail,  
 And faiths that fade!

Deep in a mountain's caverned hall,<sup>1</sup>  
 It is whispered low,  
 Waits in a weird, sepulchral glow  
 An armèd phantom, crowned and tall,  
 Whose hoary beard of centuries  
 Grows on the grey stone where it lies;  
 While jewelled knights with glittering eyes  
 Glower round  
 In trance profound.

Anon, at agelong intervals,  
 The ghostly king  
 Sends a raven of sable wing  
 From his stupendous prison-walls,  
 To learn how near the fated hour,  
 When he may reassume the power . . .  
 Behold! no raven comes again. . . .

. . . Behold! the raven devours the slain!  
 Vaults asunder  
 Burst in thunder!  
 Lo! in the hall of mirrors yonder,  
 In a palace consecrate to all  
 Agelong glories of the Gaul,

<sup>1</sup> The legend affirms that the Emperor Barbarossa waits in a cavern of the Untersberg, near Salzburg, for the reconstitution of the German Empire.

A German wears imperial  
 Purple: Barbarossa lives!  
 The ghost of a dark age revives,  
 And the heart of every freeman dies,  
 Seeing him rise!

Yet roses flower, roses flower!  
 And liberty,  
 Glorious, ardent, springs to the sky,  
 With breath as of morning, to overpower  
 Slaves that cower  
 In apathy!

Yea, roses bloom: a rose shall bloom  
 In the grave of France,  
 Whose breath, as of morning, may re-entrance  
 The spectre, till he slink to the tomb,  
 His eternal doom  
 Breathed from France!  
 She in her lingering agony  
 Dooms her tyrant with an eye  
 Charged with the light of liberty!

#### ODE TO ENGLAND

Arm! England, arm! for all men point  
 the finger  
 Toward thee with scorn they little care to veil:  
 "Doth not the mouldering hull of England  
 linger  
 Upon her sea of gold, with idle sail?  
 Once she was other! once we shrank dismayed  
 Before the lightning of her baring blade;  
 Once through the storm her ocean glory  
 burst,  
 She, stormy petrel, she the ocean-nurst,  
 Upon her foes, who pale beheld the stream  
 Of her bright ensign, like Aurora, gleam  
 Over foam-billows bounding wild: hurrah!  
 England is drowsier than at Trafalgar!"

Arm! England, arm! the halcyon hour  
 must wait  
 When Love and Righteousness shall vanquish  
 Hate.  
 Jesus of old was royal hailed in scorn:  
 Now the world crowns Him—still it is with  
 thorn!

Nobles and kings go armèd to the teeth:  
Lo! where thy loving sister bleeds beneath  
Their haughty feet: she calls thee to her side:  
They clank their swords at thee with insolent  
pride.

"Old England, mumbling, paralysed, and  
cold,

Shrinks closer clutching at her hoards of  
gold!"

Why should the mailèd sons of tyranny taunt  
Thee, champion of the free, with windy  
vaunt?

Arm! England, arm! they mouth at Liberty,  
Who with a mother's impulse turns to thee!  
Fair is our dream of universal peace;  
But there be wolves, and lambs of tender  
fleece.

Tyranny summons all her swarms of slaves,  
Horrent with weapons: daughter of the  
waves!

Is it a time for thee to loll and bask.  
And murmur at the burden of thy casque?  
Yea, thou art sedulous to nurse thy health,  
Resentful of a menace to thy wealth:  
But in the hour of thine extremity,  
Look for no pitying tear to cloud one eye  
Among the sister nations loitering by!  
Now that thy faithful friend is in the dust,  
Whose features fair may next inflame the lust  
Of her inexorable conqueror,  
Or of his mailed kinsman emperor?  
If thou, the hope of Freedom, lie supine,  
Indifferent beyond thy belt of brine,  
Where Freedom wrestles with a libertine,  
Beware for thine!

Shall not God judge the race that cannot feel  
Itself a member of one living commonweal?  
That nation dies; elects to be alone;  
Severed in sooth, dead lumber, shall be thrown  
Among bare buried piles of bone!  
Canst thou, then, fear to arm thy children free,  
Who cradled lay upon the bosom of Liberty?  
Whom from herself she nourished, whom  
with motion

And lullabies of the everlasting ocean  
She soothed from earliest infancy,  
While, in loud winds and waves careering, she  
Sings to her mariners who rule the sea!

Arm all thy children! not a caste of drones:  
Then shalt thou see those anarchs on their  
throne

Abase their domineering front—behold  
Helvetia, splendid, blithe, and bold!  
The sons who breathe her liberal mountain  
air,

The men who scale her precipice and dare  
All dangers of her bleak eternal snows,  
A race of hardy hunters, who repose  
Fearless beneath her sparkling stars, nor  
blanch

To dream their bed may prove a thunderous  
avalanche,

Whose spirits with their native eagle soar,  
Whose kindred souls dilating love the roar  
Of icy cataracts, the Aar, the Rhine,  
The Rhone that foams among the murmuring  
pine—

Are these not armed? Yea, every man will  
bleed

For the fair land of Arnold Winkelried!  
France waved the banner of the free,  
When it fell from the hands of Italy:  
Alas! she fails—but England, thou  
Hast a Daughter of starry brow,  
Whose arms receive thy setting sun:  
She, in a forest vast and lone,  
With awful gladness hears intone  
Niagara, and the Amazon!  
Freedom before her mountain citadel  
Placed you, two giants, each her wakeful  
sentinel!

## THE CHILDREN'S GRASS

### I

WHERE the twinkling river pushes  
Thwart the dipping swan,  
All his ruffling down  
Very softly blown,  
Lustrous blue reflects the rushes  
Where the coot is gone;  
Thames, an innocent heart of childhood,  
Buoying lovers from the wild wood,

Hearing boyish laughter chime  
Where the flashing oars keep time,  
Where they quiver  
In the river:

In a sunshine sown with song  
Of many a merry bird,  
Three sunny children bound along,  
With many a merry word.  
Their eyes blue fountains of delight,  
And every cheek a rose,  
Their dimpled hands with grasses light  
So full, they hardly close.  
One fawn-like little maiden falls  
Breathless upon her mother,  
Telling how yonder elf who calls,  
Her tiny wavering brother,  
Chose to pull the tender stems  
Where the dew-drop lingers,  
And marvelled when the limpid gems  
Fell upon his fingers.  
She tells a soft-eyed rabbit brown  
Near a wimpling runnel  
Eyed them askance, then hurried down  
Through a plantain tunnel.  
In the woodland sweetly smell  
Fairy grass and clover,  
Sensitive in the woodland dell,  
Where the bees hum over;  
"O! I love the summer well;  
Mother, will it soon be over?"

## II

Where the unholy river gleameth,  
Deep, and cold, and dun,  
Hiding secrets from the sun,  
As an awful dream one dreameth,  
As Oblivion:

Three little children in the reek  
Of the monster town,  
With a woman worn and weak,  
Ere the sun goes down,  
Toil by flare of ghastly light  
In a dingy fume:

Two young children carry bright  
Grasses in the room:  
An elder sister with her mother  
Decks the blades with glass,  
Sprinkles one and then another,  
As with dews of grass.  
How the vivid verdure gleams  
In the child's old face!  
Starved and very pale she seems,  
With a hollow place  
Dark beneath her eyes, how wearied,  
Lashless looking on the bleared  
Mimic grass,  
Dewed with glass!  
Hark! she gives a feeble cough,  
And the withered mother  
Glances where some paces off  
A coffin holds another  
Maiden very cold and white,  
Not yet hidden out of sight.  
"Mother, I am very weary!"  
So she moans with accents dreary:  
"Mother, make my bed!"  
"Child," the woman answers, "finish!  
Dare not from your task diminish  
Aught, for fear a watchful neighbour,  
Bidding lower for the labour,  
Seize our bitter bread!"  
Ladies in a lusted hall  
Wear them gaily for a ball  
In their fair  
Wavy hair.

"Mother, I can toil no longer;  
After sleep I shall be stronger!" . . .  
. . . After sleep, the child was dead.

There the unholy river gleameth,  
Deep, and cold, and dun,  
Hiding secrets from the sun,  
As an awful dream one dreameth,  
As Oblivion:

Are not these thy children, Father?  
These—or only those?  
Are all lost orphans rather?  
Of whom—none knows.

## THE CHILDREN BY THE SEA

AH! merry children on the smooth sea sand,  
Floating toy-navies, with your spades of  
wood

Delving until the salt sea-water stand

In moat-like hollows, with a mimic flood  
Girdling a mimic fort; or gathering shells  
And briny delicate sea-weed; how the air  
Blows in glad faces, and the wave compels  
Your flight with laughter, leaving a crystal  
rare

Upon the ripple-pencilled sand! how fair  
Life seems, the very weary life we know,

In your exuberant play, that loves to  
feign

Age has arrived! Ah! life will never glow

For you as now when you are old; remain  
Children for ever! common things ye deem

Miraculous joy; battle and storm and death  
With swift bright gesture, eager eyes, ye  
dream!

Breeze blows bright hair of curled blue  
billows too;

But sparkling waves less merrily dance than  
you!

Apart from these one little boy,

Listless fingering a toy,

With dim dull eyes and darkened face,

Seemed a cloud upon the place.

Sitting on a stone, there lowered

Some black-vestured man who showered

Shameful words upon the child,

And later, when he feebly smiled,

Struck him with a cruel oath:

Him and my heart: he wounded both.

That was his father; tears fell slow;

I heard his bitter crying low.

Dwindled all the shouts of joy

To the sobbing of a boy;

Death fell over sky and ocean.

Paralysing happy motion.

A helpless child, behold it cower!

Yet, ah! the desolating power!

Withering green earth I trod,

A small hand shook the throne of God.

Day and night it clings to me,

A child's low wail of misery:

I see the faded purple dress,

The little steps of weariness

Wavering home in their distress.

The blow falls I may not arrest;

The child hangs on my helpless breast.

Death take all of us to rest!

Sea and sky glow around that form!

Cease, idle breeze! his tears are warm:

Fall on us, giddy cliffs; we are born

For a fiend's ghastly mockery and scorn!

Man, forbear!

Before this arid waste of human life,

Before the illusive glory, and the strife,

With Fate that baffles, with a stifling coil

Of Sin that conquers; ere the weary toil

For food which turns to ashes in the mouth;

Before our darlings vanish, and the drouth

Of souls athirst for Truth and Righteous-  
ness,

Beauty and Love, who only feign to bless;

Ere feeling no expense of passionate breath

Stays the stern Hand that never faltereth,

Pushing us nearer to the abyss of death—

For little children shines one happy hour

In youth's fair morning land, a land in flower,

Tended of angels, folded from the world,

A haven where the stainless sail is furled:

A realm of faery, a delicious place,

Fresh with young dews of love and human  
grace:

Here, like soft lambs, in the ever-living sun

Innocent children leap, and laugh, and  
run;

Here a perennial fountain springs to light,

And with a misty silver-rainbow dight

Woods an eternal verdure from the earth;

Where in a gleam of ever-murmuring mirth

Bathe pure white children, they who seem to  
borrow

Bliss from sweet lower lives, that fear no  
morrow;

Whom if a momentary pain annoy,

'Tis but a breezy ruffling of the joy.

All holy generous human spirits bend

Lowly here, with looks of light that lend

Warmth and fresh lustre to the home of  
 Youth,  
 Wonder and Faith, and Ecstasy and Truth:  
 Jesus, the child, the Lord of Love and  
 Ruth,  
 Reigns over all, Love's lacerated Lord;  
 And till the demon with a flaming sword  
 Drives one and then another to the wild,  
 We bless the Saviour for a little child.

Man, forbear!

Nay! not for every little child we praise:  
 For what is yonder cloud upon the blaze?  
 Among the happy lies one little thing  
 Weeping, and over him a torturing  
 Fiend men call Father: all are happy here,  
 Saving this one who feels the mortal fear,  
 And agonises; all before the gloom  
 Of life have respite, but one suffers doom  
 From dawn to sunset; even this holy ground  
 Is not for innocence inviolate found!  
 Even the charmed Eden Love hath fenced  
 from evil,

Insolently desecrated by the Devil!  
 Even his small birthright of dissolving bliss  
 Torn from a tiny helpless child like this,  
 Ghostly reflecting in a babe's despair  
 Cain's brand of wrinkled infamy and care!  
 Child! thou arraignest on his throne sub-  
 lime

Him whom our fathers trusted, for the crime  
 That smote thee flaunts triumphant in his  
 face;

And Love may only tearful eyes abase,  
 While Fate o'erwhelms his glory with dis-  
 grace!

. . . Man, forbear!

Who withers hearts around him with his frown  
 Creates a parching desert for his own.  
 Vea, all good angels, when thou art athirst  
 In flame, shall fly from thee, O man accurst!  
 Lo! the avenging little children run  
 Out of their sea and land graves, wicked one:  
 Moan thou beneath the body of thy son!  
 Ah! let us hope that Jesus yet may fold  
 Within his bosom the lamb lost and cold,  
 Lead him to rest where sunny pastures lie,  
 And where still waters flow eternally!

## AZRAEL

### A DREAM OF PLEASURE

*"Azrael, the angel of death."*

MOURN for Annabel!

The village bell is tolling, and she will  
 Never arise from where she lieth still,  
 Cold and so lovely, flowers white and red,  
 Old dames and tender damozels have shed  
 Tearful, all over her, in shadowy air  
 Alive with perfume curling blue and rare,  
 Jewels and gold and jasper glowing deep  
 As in a dreamland of a solemn sleep,  
 With solemn music plaining while the  
 mourners weep.

Fair Azrael, with Annabel the child  
 Of Southern suns, a panther supple and wild,  
 Mellow and beautiful, the while one tarried  
 Far hence, a man she never loved but married,  
 Wandered in sweet communion day and night  
 Within her garden, shielded from the light  
 Of suns too violent, under pensile palm,  
 And aromatic, glossy-leaved calm  
 Orange, with lemon wedding boughs above;  
 In whose green twilight bridal blooms of  
 love

Bud, and expand their petals, till they shed  
 Lavish white coronals on either head,  
 On lustrous ebony and golden head.  
 They wandered where a soft Æolian sea  
 Fills far off with profound tranquillity  
 Half of the interval, which lies between  
 Shadowy cypresses and pines that lean  
 Over the sunlight; half is filled with air  
 Azure as ocean; near, a fountain fair  
 Singing springs ever 'thwart blue air and main,  
 A shifting snowcloud, twinkling into rain,  
 Drifting to fume that feeds earth's emerald:  
 Anon their dreamy vision is enthralled  
 With scintillating of a ruffled ocean  
 Among thin olive-foliage in motion:  
 Seaward from flowers around their feet a lawn  
 Slopes; all the greenery's a haunt of faun,  
 Or nymph marmoreal: from shade to shade  
 On the sea-lustre glows and glides to fade,

Swiftly and silent, many a wing-like sail  
 Of bark aerial ; never seems to fail  
 Some new surprise of freshly-flowing joy,  
 Wafting young lives afar from all annoy.  
 Eros and Psyche in white marble embrace,  
 Whom lustrous-leaved camellias enlase :  
 In light and shadow of a terebinth,  
 Elsewhere, upon a myrtle-inwoven plinth,  
 Heavenly Hebe her perennial charm  
 Unfolds ; young Dionysos a lithe arm  
 Curls over lovelocks, and a rounded form,  
 In fair profusion of lit vine-leaves warm.  
 When either Phidian image glows in roses  
 Lavish around them, or at eve reposes  
 Flushed with a glory, breatheth every one  
 Alive, a new bride of Pygmalion.  
 Sweet Mitylene, isle of love and song,  
 Two fair young lovers for an hour prolong  
 Reverberate modulations from the lyre,  
 Whose soul still haunts thee with voluptuous  
 fire!

Sappho, Arion, and Terpander breathe  
 O'er hill and valley ; lawny mists enwreath  
 Faintly before all lovers oversea  
 A mountain, hued like flowers of memory ;  
 Where Aphrodite, born of Paphian foam,  
 Found the fair shepherd in his piny home,  
 And where, on Ida, an imperial Bird  
 Ravished a fairer from his pipes and herd.

They read or sang sweet songs, and oft a  
 star  
 Thrilled in a roseate eve to her guitar.  
 She wore pomegranate crimson in her hair,  
 Around her waist and shoulders only rare  
 Silk from Olympian looms, like gossamer ;  
 While languid pearls lay heavingly on her  
 Virginal bosom ; ambergris and myrrh  
 Enkindling breathe from ocean-blue enamel,  
 Whose misty fervours golden lids entammel :  
 And while they taste a bright Methymnian  
 wine,  
 Amber-inhaled ambrosial fumes entwine  
 Delicious dream around them : fingers fine  
 Fill often his half-laughing, amorous lips  
 With pleasant, garnet-hued pomegranate pips,  
 Or luscious, lucent dainties that her skill  
 Can from sweet, crimson-hearted fruits distil.

If with his wanton mouth he gently bite,  
 But very gently will she feign to smite.  
 Three interlaced half-moons of diamond  
 Thrill for rich ecstasy to link, with frond  
 Of fern-wrought rubies, on her balmy breast  
 Her silk translucency of filmy vest.  
 He wore a slumbrous oriental gold  
 Dusky with silk inwoven, half unrolled  
 From a white bosom of ideal mould.

Once when a silver-clanging chime  
 Told the stealthy flight of time,  
 They left a cedar-raftered chamber,  
 Where oil in opaline and amber  
 Gleamed, as mildest lamps are able,  
 Over furs of lynx and sable ;  
 Crimson wools, Iranian fur  
 Of panther, pard, or miniver.  
 And while they went, some drowsy doves  
 In holm and laurel flew like loves  
 Over them ; the mild fireflies  
 Gleamed before their happy eyes.

Fair was the night when youth and lady  
 slept  
 From where their lemon-tinted villa slept,  
 With balustrade and roofing palely grey,  
 Laved of the moon, beneath a grove that lay  
 Under enchantment, to a hushful bower  
 Of bay and asphodel, with passion flower  
 Inwoven : it was warm and dusk therein,  
 And delicate foliage made a shadowy thin  
 Lacework suspended in aerial blue  
 Silvery twilight, over where they two,  
 Muffled in mossful secrecy, reclined  
 Nigh one another, Azrael behind.

“ In the tree  
 A murmur, as of indolent shed sea  
 On sands at midnight ceasing slumbrously !  
 Through dim, uncoloured leaves  
 An elfin glimmer cleaves  
 A varying way from realms of mystery.”  
 So sang she softly to her soft guitar,  
 And ceased ; and both were silent, hearing  
 far  
 The bubbling fountain, and a nightingale,  
 That seemed to flow at intervals and fail.

Her face for him was pencilled pure and fine  
 Athwart the gloaming; and, "O lady mine,"  
 He whispered, "how adorable are you  
 To-night! forgive me!" till there softly grew  
 A tender arm around her form, and she  
 Yielded and leaned on him responsively,  
 Until his blood ran fire when she pressed  
 Her dewy, ripe young lips upon his breast,  
 Moonwhite in moonlight; for a ray had come  
 To nestle in the fair, congenial home.  
 Then mouth burned mouth, her undulating  
 charms

Yielding to his luxurious young arms.  
 Later, in sweet confusion's disarray,  
 Hand in hand stole they to a little bay,  
 Where a pale foam stole out of a grey sea,  
 And kissed the pale rock ever murmurously.  
 Cypress leaned mournful over, and a throng  
 Of hushful moonwhite houses lay along  
 Von circling shoreside, minarets, how fair!  
 Arising tall and slender into air:  
 A chaunt was wafted from a fisher's boat,  
 Dozing upon the pearl with nets afloat.  
 Shadowy, folding mountains from the sea  
 Rise to enclose the bay's chalcedony:  
 Ida beyond, dim silvered of the moon,  
 Soars with her snow in some enchanted  
 swoon:  
 Delicate shells with whorl, and valve, and  
 spire

Gleam in a rhythmic phosphorescent fire.  
 Silently dreams near yonder myrtle brake  
 An egret, plumed as with a soft snowflake,  
 Like a pure soul by some celestial lake.  
 Lo! now the lovers' dainty limbs will lave  
 In the delicious coolness of the wave.

"I with thee,  
 By fringes of the pale, enamoured sea,  
 On the shore's bosom dying dreamfully,  
 Singing in the leaves,  
 Love it is who weaves  
 Around our hearts a heavenly mystery!"  
 Then as they neared their villa, in a tunnel  
 Of oranges where purls a crystal runnel,  
 A rustle in the trees she thought she heard,  
 And deemed she saw a shadow; "'Tis a  
 bird,"

He whispered, after pausing: "all's a  
 dream!"  
 She murmured, "Ah! how heavenly a  
 dream!" . . .  
 . . . Out of the shadow flashed a steely  
 gleam:  
 Her own death-shriek awoke her, and she fell  
 At the feet of her angel Azrael.

Mourn for Annabel!  
 The village bell is tolling, and she will  
 Never arise from where she lieth still,  
 Cold and so lovely, flowers white and red.  
 Old dames and tender damozels have shed  
 Tearful, all over her, in shadowy air  
 Alive with perfume curling blue and rare.  
 Jewels and gold and jasper glowing deep  
 As in a dreamland of a solemn sleep,  
 With solemn music plaining while the  
 mourners weep.

### SAN ROCCO

THERE is a little chapel rude  
 On a terraced hill,  
 With cypress round the solitude  
 Of a platform still;

Cypress flames of darkling green,  
 Rich athwart the blue;  
 Fair among them ocean-sheen  
 Softly twinkles through.

Within one open end, in line,  
 Vessels rudely made  
 Hang, with perils of the brine  
 On either wall, displayed.

Each unskilful picture shows,  
 On the marge, a form  
 Of Her who, when the whirlwind blows,  
 Saveth men from storm.

There a lamp of silver gleams,  
 Like an evening star;  
 O'er a spangled altar beams,  
 In twilight cool afar.

Home-bound sailors from the deep,  
 When the belfry small  
 Of San Rocco on the steep  
 First appeareth, fall

At our Lady's feet of grace :  
 When a woman old,  
 Gaunt and homeliest of her race,  
 Falteringly told

The story of her son to me,  
 A bold young mariner,  
 How once he sailed, and from the sea  
 Came ne'er again to her ;

And how he vowed before he sailed,  
 If ever he returned,  
 His votive vessel should be nailed,  
 And in the lamp be burned

His votive amber oil above,  
 At yonder mountain shrine,  
 Where perilled sailors prove their love  
 To Mary the Divine ;

Where every pious mariner  
 Leaves a lowly gift for Her ;  
 Fair the mother was with tears,  
 For all her homeliness and years.

NERVI.

### TO THE QUEEN

DEAR loyal lady, tender and brave and  
 true,

Dear lady of our loyal hearts are you !  
 Who will dethrone a kindly human grace,  
 To crown the bloodless huckster in your  
 place ?

There is a canker in the social core :  
 And some would fain persuade us that no  
 more

We need than civil change of name and  
 form :

Ah ! specious pleading of the cankerworm !

### A SEA SYMPHONY

#### I

#### TEMPEST

OCEAN, eternal mother of the free !  
 Thine uproar is the sound of Liberty.  
 Shout forth a clarion-call tempestuously !  
 "England, though comfortable sleep be sweet,  
 Whispering emperors ominously meet :  
 What if they murder Freedom, murder man ?  
 Shall not thy rent red flag inflame the van  
 Of battle as erst ? Arouse thee unto war !  
 Harken how thunderpeals from Trafalgar,  
 Nile, and the Baltic, thine heroic past,  
 Fill loud my clarions of surge and blast !  
 Awake ! for fear thy lethargy may prove the  
 last !"

Grand lion-leap of billows ! how they fall,  
 Plunging with hunger to devour the shore !  
 Hurl'd mountain of blown billow 'thwart the  
 wall  
 Of cliff precipitous bursting with stupendous  
 roar !

Cavernous halls of hoary mountains under  
 Shake with a shock of subterranean thunder,  
 Rumble with roll of long reverberate thunder !  
 Crushed all the turbid water-mountain toils,  
 Whose slain, immense, pale, shadowy ghost  
 is thrown

High among hurrying storm-cloud, and recoils  
 Seethingly, limply plashing on the stone.  
 While underneath a baffled field of foam,  
 Poured out disorderly, retreats to rise  
 One fulvous mass of spume upon a dome  
 Of wave colossal threatening the skies :  
 Lo ! as it sweeps imperial, the curl  
 In toppling hangs arrested by a swirl  
 Refluent baffled ; rears aloft to hurl  
 All, one grim rampart perpendicular,  
 Bodily heavenward, whose wrestling froth,  
 In terrible welter of tumultuous wrath,  
 Flickers to momentary crags of spar ;  
 Headlong to ruin charges with an ocean jar,  
 A headlong ruin of water, heard inland afar !

Terrific hurricane of howling wind and sea !  
 Cower from the whirlwind, lest in scorn it  
 scatter thee !

L

Or fling thee in the ravening cauldron there—  
Cling to the rock—let tawny salt seafoam  
flakes tear

Hissingly o'er thee from a turbulent despair!  
Shout forth thy drowned and feeble human  
shout of joy,

In fellow-feeling with the elements, a toy  
Of the blind Titans, yet a toy that knows. . .

. . . But what is this at hand that reels,  
and drifts, and bows?

Not helpless chaos of a huge oarweed,  
Torn up and strewn far, senseless rage to feed—  
A ship! a ship! a horrible vision here!

One snapt mast with its tangling cordage-gear  
Overboard flounders; on the flooded deck  
Three scared men desperate clinging strain  
the neck

To look for any help toward the rocky roar;  
Whom Death alone confronts upon the awful  
shore!

A small black dog i' the hatchway yelping  
piteously—

I see it still—a crash—anon victoriously  
Climb maniac cataracts upon rent planks and  
corse clamorously!

# II

## CALM

After two days I lay reclined in peace  
Near the sea margin; delicate soft fleece  
Of cloud lay poised above me, and the sea  
Slumbered about her shores, how tranquilly!  
Gentle as a child, she opened her blue eyes  
In murmurous foamsmile of a faint surprise,  
Touching the strand: yon vaporous head-  
lands are

Suffused with mellow sunlight, while afar  
A nebulous isle half fades into the sky,  
Like some dear hoped-for possibility.  
Hushful sea-murmur lulls all pain to sleep,  
Breathing enchantment from the Holy Deep—  
One feels so happy here, one fain would weep!  
Among fair silver labyrinths a stain  
Of solemn purple on the lonely main  
Long from one cloud lies; in still mother o'  
pearl

Yonder no white sail will a vessel furl

To-day, among the "innumerable smile"  
Of one who hides no wrath, nor harbours  
guile;

Zephyr with his soft seaplume fans the while.  
Quietly wander by the quiet shore,  
To find enrapturing wonders more and more!  
Here, ankle-deep in valvèd shelly shingle,  
Merry young children, with white limbs  
atingle,

Leap laughing, while a playful ripple blue  
Merrily laves them; ah! how fair the hue  
Of azure sea set by a dovelike tone  
Of boulders, where I wander all alone!  
Now and then their prevailing hue will bring  
Aerial colour, soft as seamew wing,  
On water, modulating mirrored sky  
To filmy pureness of chalcedony.  
In still sea-waters of a cove will grow  
Slim growths of splashing crystal, when there  
flow,

Oceanward tinkling, rillets from above,  
Born among hazels, while with ocean love  
Glisten low-lying rocks in many a cove.  
Weird block of waveworn labyrinthine grey,  
Hollowed out, with small opening for day  
Somewhere concealed as one explores, a fairy  
Or mermaid may haunt thee, little wary  
Of man's intrusion on her lonely spot,  
Or sleepy seal may use thee, twilit grot!  
But many a wondrous cavern richly hued  
Quavers in delicate waterlight, imbued  
Their dim recesses with a dusk maroon,  
Mossgreen or lilac, all a quiet tune  
Of heaving water hearing, while sea-flowers  
Crimson or wavegreen bud in all the bowers.  
This lofty cave's a gorgeous palace-gate,  
Where some Sea-Genius holds royal state:  
Surely the stillness may invite to float  
Pensively hither in a slender boat,  
And pore upon the faint seagroves remote!  
Where now thy terrible moods, O sea? . . .  
. . . But this?

In yon dark fissure where an ocean-kiss  
Tenderly falls in music, a dim mass  
Sways with a nigh impalpably-heaved glass:  
Creep near . . . it wears a horrible human  
shape!

An eyeless head is nodding from the nape.

Poor ghastly mockery of a human form,  
 Jammed here in fierce delirium of storm!  
 And look! a shadowy monster in the deep  
 Looms huge and hungry near the awful sleep!  
 Yonder a board swims rusty-nailed and rent,  
 Four painted letters with the tangle blent.  
 There is a mellow, dark-eyed maid in Spain,  
 Who waits a token from a foreign main.

## III

## TWILIGHT

A little wandering child has lost his way  
 On a hushed mountain at the close of day,  
 On a brine-bitten waste that slopes to grey  
 Abrupt cliffs, where a melancholy sea  
 Expands a far, slow-wrinkling mercury:  
 One cold, dim gleam, with three dark shadows  
 vast,

From clouds immense in faded blues amassed,  
 Shadows that in a dreary twilight brood  
 Portentous phantom Presences, imbued,  
 Silently awful, with a life not ours;  
 While on the seashore formidably lowers  
 A corrugated monster bulk of stone;  
 Some huge, unwieldy monster left alone,  
 Slumbrous aware, with face toward old Ocean,  
 Since some pre-human age when such as he  
 had motion.

Rude, samphired, pinnacled, great crags  
 arise

Sheer from dull seas into low, dusky skies;  
 And one, a ghostly giant, leans athwart  
 Twilight, to watch him wandering, huge and  
 swart!

Through one wild arch in yonder cape wave-  
 worn

Expands a dreary infinite forlorn.

Infinite, pale, and dim and desolate,  
 Monotonous Ocean, with the Voice of Fate  
 Breathes homeless, helpless, and disconsolate.  
 Some sere, sparse mountain-bents moan  
 shivering,

As the gust wearies them, and withered ling.  
 Near a path, pale with night that deepens  
 round,

A ruinous gate stirs with an eerie sound.

Ah! were it she who came to seek the child  
 His mother! with a piteous gesture wild  
 He turns and calls: alas! she will not come;  
 Dead mother knows not he is lost from home!  
 Dusk flaps a heavy-flighted cormorant,  
 Whereat the timorous breast begins to pant:  
 What dwarfed old man distorted threatens  
 him?

'Tis but a dry tree with blast-writhen limb!  
 Now, chill at heart, the little wanderer weeps,  
 And stumbles pale among the rugged steeps.

But God hath pity on a babe's despair:  
 For now he gains a summit; unaware  
 There breaks upon his poor, tear-misted sight  
 A blissful vision of supreme delight!  
 Cheery near lights of houses in the town;  
 And cheery murmuring human tones are  
 blown

Upon the wind towards him! then the child  
 Thanked God who led him hither from the  
 wild;

Brushed with his hand the tears, and ran so  
 fast;

Clasped in his father's happy arms at last!

## IV

## BREEZE

Climb upon yonder ivied neck of rock,  
 Flanked with twin chasms, and hear unrestful  
 shock

Of tidal water in the caves rebuffed,  
 With fierce, impatient contumely cuffed,  
 Along the front of stern embattled coast,  
 Spat forth in spray from sombre innermost  
 Hollows; and ever heaving blindly under,  
 Blundering in with subterranean thunder!  
 Stumbling and fumbling, water in the caves,  
 Like a strange, sullen beast, assaults and braves  
 The rocky scorn for ever; chafed to froth,  
 Bellowing snorts in impotent dull wrath;  
 So famished beast prowls ever, thrusting snout  
 Under his bars, in pain till he break out.  
 Yea, this immortal, subtle, importunate Sea,  
 Conquers our stolid Earth implacably.  
 Though round our ruined shores He laugh  
 and dally,

Chafing for war his proud battalions rally.

See how the simmering wash of swelling wave  
 Feels all alive along rich ooze of cave!  
 Yon grand expansive green hath belts to-day  
 Of blue and tawny, flecked with sparkling  
 spray

By the brisk breeze that blows with cheerful  
 play,  
 Wafting a merry crest in snowy smoke,  
 Glassed in the billow while it tossed and  
 broke!

And there is evermore a restless wreath  
 Around the innumerable sharp shark's teeth,  
 Black flames rough crusted, threatening fangs  
 of death.

Yonder, lo! the tide is flowing;  
 Clamber, while the breeze is blowing,  
 Down to where a soft foam flusters  
 Dulce and fairy feathery clusters!  
 While it fills the shelly hollows,  
 A swift sister billow follows,  
 Leaps in hurrying with the tide,  
 Seems the lingering wave to chide;  
 Both push on with eager life,  
 And a gurgling show of strife.  
 O the salt, refreshing air  
 Shrilly blowing in the hair!  
 A keen, healthful savour haunts  
 Sea-shell, sea-flower, and sea-plants.  
 Innocent billows on the strand  
 Leave a crystal over sand,  
 Whose thin ebbing soon is crossed  
 Of a crystal foam-enmossed,  
 Variegating silverygrey  
 Shell-empetalled sand in play:  
 When from sand dries off the brine,  
 Vanishes swift shadow fine;  
 But a wet sand is a glass  
 Where the plummy cloudlets pass,  
 Floating islands of the blue,  
 Tender, shining, fair, and true.

Who would linger idle,  
 Dallying would lie,  
 When wind and wave, a bridal  
 Celebrating, fly?  
 Let him plunge among them,  
 Who hath wooed enough,

Flirted with them, sung them!  
 In the salt seatrough  
 He may win them, onward  
 On a buoyant crest,  
 Far to seaward, sunward,  
 Oceanborne to rest!  
 Wild wind will sing over him,  
 And the free foam cover him,  
 Swimming seaward, sunward,  
 On a blithe sea-breast!  
 On a blithe sea-bosom  
 Swims another too,  
 Swims a live sea-blossom,  
 A grey-winged seamew!  
 Grapegreen all the waves are,  
 By whose hurrying line  
 Half of ships and caves are  
 Buried under brine;  
 Supple, shifting ranges  
 Lucent at the crest,  
 With pearly surface-changes  
 Never laid to rest:  
 Now a dripping gunwale  
 Momently he sees,  
 Now a fuming funnel,  
 Or red flag in the breeze.  
 Arms flung open wide,  
 Lip the laughing sea;  
 For playfellow, for bride,  
 Claim her impetuously!  
 Triumphantly exult with all the free  
 Buoyant bounding splendour of the sea!  
 And if, while on the billow  
 Wearily he lay,  
 His awful wild playfellow  
 Filled his mouth with spray,  
 Reft him of his breath,  
 To some far realms away  
 He would float with Death;  
 Wild wind would sing over him,  
 And the free foam cover him,  
 Waft him sleeping onward,  
 Floating seaward, sunward,  
 All alone with Death;  
 In a realm of wondrous dreams,  
 And shadow-haunted ocean-gleams!

NORTH DEVON.

LIVINGSTONE IN AFRICA

1874



## P R E F A C E

THERE is a disposition among some contemporary critics to debar the Poet from contemporary subjects. One critic alleges these to be essentially unpoetical. Another—more skilled in delicate distinctions, and priding himself on the adroitness with which, as it were, by a dexterous turn of the wrist, he can cause the fine edge of them to wound, without vulgarly and directly thrusting—might prefer to say, apropos of each writer in turn who chooses such themes, that “at any rate *this* writer has not shown how contemporary subjects may be made poetical”—which remark, however, the poet, if he be a poet, can afford to treat simply as a piece of impertinence. He will have adapted his workmanship, arrangement, and mode of expression to the nature of his subject-matter. Perchance the problem of conciliating superfine collegians, or light skirmishers detached from their main body in the shape of certain “irresponsible reviewers,” and at the same time satisfying intelligent readers of poetry in general—unephemeral critics, who are beyond the passing fashion of a clique—may be a problem well-nigh as insoluble as that of perpetual motion. But if so, a poet should be prepared with contempt and defiance only for the former. To me I confess that it appears that Past and Present are equally poetical, when regarded and treated by a poet—equally unpoetical when regarded and treated by a mere versifier—though I am far from saying that every particular time is fully as poetical as any other. But the present time seems by no means deficient in that respect. No age is heroic to its valet-de-chambre; and every age has many valets-de-chambre. If there is danger from vulgar and debasing associations, and from fragmentary nearness, in the Present, which has not yet “orbed into the perfect star,” there is equal danger from

remoteness in the Past—few imaginations being indeed adequate satisfactorily to realise very different conditions of life and thought. The name of little flutterers, whose inanimate remains are strewn along the avenue that leads to the Temple of Fame, is Legion: but pseudo-classical and pseudo-mediaeval versifiers are surely not inadequately represented among them. Some indeed have failed in poetically representing what passed under their eyes, because the eyes of the soul were wanting—the Poet’s second sight. Moreover, the genius of some true poets has proved more at home in those rarer, yet still to them living, regions of the Past. I do not think the age of Chaucer was much more poetical than the age of Victor Hugo and Tennyson: but Chaucer contrived to see and represent his age poetically: and though, perhaps, Tennyson’s greatest works have dealt with ideal, romantic, or classical themes, he has shown himself master also in setting contemporary life to music. If Shakespeare wrote Julius Cæsar, he also wrote Henry VIII.; and Hamlet is essentially modern. Dante does not appear to have thought his own age unpoetic, though himself the master of ideal or spiritual creations. Dante, and Milton, set the dominant theologies of their own day to music; while Dante is full of allusions to passing events. Homer did not endeavour to reproduce classically correct imitations of the poems he may have read in Egyptian papyri. Gama, the hero of Camoens’ epic, was still alive when the poet was a boy; and Camoens himself took part in adventures similar to those which he relates—indeed he contrives to relate what was actually happening in the *Lusiad* itself. Dryden wrote of Contemporary Politics; Pope sang the Rape of the Lock; Byron sang contemporary life in *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan*; Wordsworth also in some of

his greatest poems. So did Campbell, Gray, and Goldsmith at their best—while Scott, if he sang of chivalry, sang at least of Scotland. The greatest work of Goethe is distinctly modern; so are the works of Hugo and De Musset. Spenser, Chatterton, Landor, and Keats, on the other hand—may one not add Mr. Browning?—breathe more freely in alien, or ideal, atmospheres; but then they do themselves breathe there; they do not merely simulate the accents of those who once did so.

That events of our own time may be treated poetically has been proved by our greatest poetess, Mrs. Browning; although, partly from the fact that England as a nation has withdrawn herself more and more from active participation in events of cosmopolitan interest, our writers of verse have not recently invited attention to contemporary themes; while studious readers have seemed disposed to discourage such attempts. But two or three genuine poets have quite lately made successful efforts to break through a somewhat vulgar, prosaic, and discreditable apathy—though it is one no doubt on which our fashionable *petite culture* very much plumes itself. In America we have, for instance, Longfellow and Walt Whitman; while in England we have not only Arthur Clough, and R. Buchanan, but also Mr. Swinburne, who wrote recently the “Songs before Sunrise.” These poets at all events have proved that they do not, from feeling their own impotence, desire to insult their Mother-Age, and charge her with all the responsibility of a defect, which after all may not be of quite cosmical urgency. More recently still, Mr. Alfred Austin seems to have comically disproved his own somewhat juvenile criticism on the futility of the age, and the consequent inevitable futility of its poets, by himself writing a really fine poem on contemporary events, “Rome or Death.”

However, in the following work I have the so much desiderated advantage of *remoteness*—remoteness, if not in time, at least in place. Africa is a long way off; Cook’s tourists do not go to Ujiji; and both men and nature in Africa are very different from what they are immediately around us—if that be an advantage. My object has been to sing the *modern Explorer*—suggesting, dimly it may be, the *Explorer*, or *Seeker*, in a wider sense. In an oasis of the Sahara,

and other remote regions, a poem on this subject dawned on me. It is a subject peculiarly modern, peculiarly English, and as I believe peculiarly poetical; one destined, moreover, to be always interesting. Even the most jaded student, to whom life and nature as he sees them are “flat, stale and unprofitable,” must (one would fancy) be interested in the records of exploration that are published from time to time by great travellers. At any rate young persons, and persons young-hearted, though no longer young in years, are appealed to in my poem. I have done my best: for its shortcomings, I must appeal to the indulgence of such sympathetic readers as these. If I shall have been enabled to impart to them any measure of elevated enjoyment, I shall be satisfied. The *Explorer in Africa*, a most ancient, till yesterday almost unknown land; North of which lies Egypt; South of which lies Ethiopia, and all her still half-hidden marvels! the very regions of earthly mystery; yet how profoundly and pathetically human after all in their strange disclosures!

Poets used to sing of heroes, and great actions. I do not know why they should now only spin subtle cobwebs out of their own insides. Nor, however, do I know how long a period must elapse, according to the dogmas of “culture,” before a mere dead man may (by virtue of mischievous worshipping and myth-making propensities unfortunately inherent in our race) be considered as fairly canonised—elevated to the dignity of “a hero.” But for my part, I used to think Livingstone a true hero while he was alive; and my opinion of him is only not changed now that he is dead. Our two Florences, Florence Nightingale, and Florence Lady Baker, moreover, appear to me to be heroines—though both of them (one is glad to know) are still alive. Nor should those brave exploring ladies, the Dutch Miss Tinnés, be forgotten here. At any rate, the figure of David Livingstone admirably fills the shadowy, but colossal outlines of the *Explorer*.

I have endeavoured to represent his life, adventures, character and aims, with the accuracy of fact: though in one instance I have imagined a scene characteristic of a phase of African experience, which would otherwise have remained unillustrated; but this is a kind of experience which Livingstone

might easily have passed through personally ; and of course I have exercised a privilege of selection. The scene of the first Cantos is laid at Ujiji on Lake Tanganyika ; where Livingstone has been driven back by the malice or cowardice of some who followed him, when on the eve, as he believed, of solving for ever those grand problems of geography, which have engaged the world's attention from earliest ages.

He has arrived ill, worn-out, aged, destitute ; to find the goods on which he depended dissipated by the rascal to whom they had unfortunately been entrusted ; and he could (suffering as he was from his old disease, dysentery) hardly have held out much longer, had not Mr. Stanley so gallantly and unexpectedly relieved him (1871). I imagine him sitting on the open verandah of his tembé, looking eastward, as Stanley describes him ; while evening deepens, and then night—the night preceding Stanley's arrival. I suppose that—like those constellations, with which he is so familiar—the salient features of his whole life pass successively before him in his solitude ; while he meditates at leisure upon the people and scenes he has witnessed ; wonders what people and scenes are yet to be divulged for him ; speculating, moreover, on those long-vexed, fascinating problems, suggested by history, geography, and science, in connection with his beloved continent. But his chief concern—though he takes a very humane and broad interest in all—is the future of the people, among whom he has so long lived : he is a profoundly sincere Christian missionary—a philanthropist in the best and widest sense—with heart bleeding for all the ignorance, darkness, and misery, which he sees around him ; thirsting to devise the best possible means for the salva-

tion, enlightenment, and civilisation of the races. Not Wilberforce, Clarkson, Buxton, Lincoln, or "Uncle Tom's Cabin," have done more for the slave than David Livingstone. He seems to have possessed also an extraordinary power of sympathising with and personally influencing the natives, with whom he came in contact.

This is a man of the old heroic type : a grand personality, like those of Xavier, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Bellot, Ross, Parry, Franklin, Stephenson, Watt, Mungo Park ; who exhibits, in a peculiarly fascinating phase of modern life, heroic energy, and skilful perseverance in combating gigantic difficulties ; partly from ideal and humane ends—to serve God and Man—partly for the mere sake of combating those difficulties themselves. God is not tired of choosing and providing such natures, when He has a great work for them to do : indeed He provides also many obscurer workers, with natures as noble, whom He in His own way rewards. Are not men like Henry Martyn, and Bishop Patteson ; with other men and women, whose names remain hidden from the world ; members of this heroic army ? Do we indeed lack heroes ?

In Canto VI. I relate the relief of Livingstone by Stanley ; in Canto VII. Livingstone's death ; and the wonderful transport of his remains by faithful followers, to the everlasting honour of a despised race ; finally, his honoured funeral in the grand cathedral of his own land. It remains that I express my obligations to the works of great African travellers—Speke and Grant, Baker, Burton, Schweinfurth, Du Chaillu, Winwood Reade, Moffat, Stanley, Bowdich, Petherick—and to the correspondents of daily papers, who described the funeral.

OUR tuneful students, with dull downward eyes,  
Measuring one another in a dream,  
Lisp, "How the pigmy time degenerates!  
"Where are your 'heroes'? we distinguish none :  
"Your 'heroes' have no literary style!  
"Lo! we discern some dust upon their feet."  
They, poring on impalpable pale shades  
Of vanish'd years, fantastically warble,  
Singing sweet songs of phantoms in a cloud!  
Delicate warblers, fleeting as a cloud!

I lay my wreath upon a hero's grave.  
There let it bloom ; or let it wither there!

# LIVINGSTONE IN AFRICA

## CANTO I

THE sun is sinking over Africa ;  
And under shadowy native eaves reclines  
A traveller upon a fur-strewn floor ;  
One whom no years' ignoble rust, but high  
And holy toil have wasted ; bearded grey,  
In wayworn English garb he seems array'd ;  
His shoulders bow'd as from a life's long  
burden ;

His rude wan countenance profoundly scarr'd  
With noble ruin wrought by Love and Sorrow.  
Reclined against the dwelling's claybuilt wall,  
His falcon eyes explore the moonèd East.  
Athwart a wondrous land that lies before  
Slow shadow steals ; o'er all the fervid palms,  
Broadleaved banana, leaf-seas infinite,  
Hoar unfamiliar stupendous forms  
Of that primæval forest African :  
Slowly the shadow with declining day  
Fades rainbow splendour of the forest far,  
And drowns imperial purple of the hills  
In one phantasmal all-confounding gloom.

Ye mountains,<sup>1</sup> hiding undiscover'd worlds,  
So mused in spirit the lone wanderer,  
I hunger till I pass your mighty doors,  
And lay my hand upon the Mystery !  
African Andes, vast, inviolate,  
Crown'd with the cloud, robed round with  
sombre forest,  
Whose virgin snow no human feet profane  
Have swept, but only the wild eagle's wing,  
Of old your ghost on Rumour's shadowy  
breath

Wander'd abroad, O Mountains of the Moon !  
And still ye are no more than a dim name :  
Of old the Egyptian from your loins, that loom  
Large in far realms of Rumour, drew the Nile.  
Ye, couchant o'er the sultry continent,

Seem the great guardian Lion of Africa,  
Who, from primæval ages all alone,  
Silently stern, confronts a crimson dawn  
Over fair Indian seas, with face that towers  
Sunward, supreme ; feeling a warm moist  
breath,

Faint with perfume, turn crystals of soft snow  
Among the terrors of his icy mane ;  
Or, where the stature of his giant frame  
Declines to westward, feeling the breath  
change

To rain within the hollows of his heart.  
All, thundering down abrupt convulsed  
ravines,

Scarr'd in precipitous rugged flanks of stone,  
Feed wide Nyanzas ; whether there be twain,  
Or many waters, these engender thee,  
Wonderful Nile !

And yet I deem that I  
Shall find thy parent springs remoter still.  
Lualaba, with his tributary rivers,  
And liliated lakes his loving bounty fills !  
Yea, some have told me, and I well believe,  
There are four fountains clear and deep as  
day,

Welling unfathomable, perennial  
Among low hills as yet unseen, the last  
Subsiding roll, it may be, of one range  
Named of old Rumour, Mountains of the  
Moon.

Behold the shrine of living waters ! Here  
From one immense rock-temple stream the  
Souls

Of many lands and nations, whispering  
In dim enchanted caverns ; East and North,  
And West emerging, sunny wings unfold :  
Shouting they plunge in joyous waterfalls,  
To roll a priceless silver all abroad,  
Each to his Ocean, whose illustrious names  
Are Congo, Nile, and long Leacambayee !

Whom Mother Ocean, in her awful arms  
Absorbing, ever engendereth anew,  
Gendering a holy Cycle evermore.

When royal Sun his Oriental bride,  
India's Ocean, fiercely fervent woos,  
While She dissolves in his delightful love,  
What time He fronts earth's equatorial zone  
On his way North to Cancer, then the waters  
Rise in a tide of life upon the lands,  
Lying athirst and barren in his blaze.

. . . My soul, unbow'd in face of failing  
years,  
Though Hope may falter from unwearied  
hindrance of blind baseborn vicissitude,  
Swears to resolve the alluring Mystery,  
At whose cold feet our mightiest have fallen,  
Yearning to find the sacred Source, and die;  
Nor have prevail'd; but if the Lord allow,  
I and my fellow-labourers will prevail!

I seek the birth of that immortal River,  
Who bears great Egypt in her watery womb,  
Who nursed the world's prime empire on her  
bosom;

And Moses, more illustrious than all  
Pharaohs, her earth-enthralled conquerors,  
Throned in their golden hundred-gated  
Thebes,

Tomb'd in hoar wonder of the pyramids.  
At thy most holy source, primæval Nile!  
The Greek drank wisdom; yea, in solemn  
halls

Of Memphis, in columnar stone forests  
Of mighty Karnac, rich with hieroglyph,  
And pictured symbol and weird shapes of  
Gods.

Only the solar beam, the Obelisk,  
Now from green palms and verdure and pure  
rills,

As then from sacred fountains of the Sun,  
In olden time, in Heliopolis,  
Still points with mystic granite flame to  
Heaven!

This mighty gnomon of a sun-dial  
Moved then a shadow, lengthening among  
signs

Upon a porphyry or a brazen floor,  
Among blithe forms of Pharaonic time;  
Now o'er young corn and red anemone!  
There came Pythagoras to learn the lore  
Of stars, and suns, and gods, and human  
souls;

There Moses mused, well-nourish'd on rich  
stores

Of priests and sages; communing with truth,  
And in his spirit sifting dust from gold.  
Only this one most ancient monument  
Stands of thy glory, Heliopolis!

Earliest seat of learning, where the seer,  
Illustrious Plato, came from Academe,  
And sweet Ilissus; fairest star of all  
The fair young band who follow'd one wise  
master.

Here a stone astrolabe explored the night,  
Measuring solemn wanderings of stars.

Here laboratory furnaces were glowing;  
While some astrologer with mystic rites  
Drew horoscopes, or cast nativities:

But then our Earth, who in her equable  
And proud obeisant motion round the sun  
Hath in twice ten millennial periods  
Her inclined axle measurably perturb'd,  
Lean'd otherwise her pole among the skies;  
Another Polestar ruled the mariner;  
Another Ocean shrined thy radiance,  
O Christian constellation of the Cross!

While elsewhere in every tranquil night,  
Among cool calm abysses of pure space,  
Shone Sirius, Arcturus, and Orion.

Here too the holiest Child of mortal race  
Rested in humble guise with a pure Mother.

At thy most holy source, primæval Nile!  
The Greek drank wisdom; learn'd a Dædal art,  
That in his pure white light of genius,  
In that pellucid æther of his clime,  
Among pure breezes of Castalian hills,  
And delicate unrobed consummate forms  
Of radiant heroes, bloom'd in glorious  
Marble immortal gods for all the world.

Here he beheld the blazon'd Zodiac  
On loftiest firmaments of broad hewn stone  
Within dim fanes, or solemn tombs of kings;

Stupendous vaulted chambers in the heart  
Of flame-hued mountain, silently aware  
With populous imagery of men and gods,  
Hawk or ram-headed; on wide wall and  
ceiling

Beheld a constellate celestial river  
Meandering around a crystal sphere,  
And navigated in twelve lives of Moons  
By that resplendent Father of the Kings;  
Kings lying here in glory, all embalm'd,  
And jewell'd o'er with slumbering talismans,  
Asleep in their immense sarcophagi.

Yonder, on burning sands of Libya,  
Unmoved the tranquil-featured Sphinx beheld  
Abraham, Homer, Solon, all the wise  
Of every clime, who came, and saw, and  
wonder'd;

Who pass'd, leaving a heritage to man;  
Beheld dissolving dynasties of Kings,  
And all their people, pageant-like unroll'd  
Before his face; they, with o'erwhelming  
pillars

Of desert sand before the whirlwind's breath,  
Pass'd in loud pomp, and were not any more;  
The silent Sphinx regarding, as to-day,  
Beyond them all, serene Eternity!

There that colossal Memnon, while the Nile  
Pour'd like another morning all around  
Sweet life-engendering waters musical,  
Murmur'd melodious salutation,  
When first Aurora, his celestial mother,  
Smiled sweet upon him from the Orient.

Fresh from fierce thunder of the cataracts,  
Tortured among dark demon-blocks of stone  
Fireborn, divine Nile smoothes his ruffled  
flow;

Lingers a tranquil, a celestial lake  
To embrace fair Philæ, Philæ, fairest isle  
Of all earth's islands! fringed with mirror'd  
palm,  
And lotos blossom on the crystalline  
Laving her bosom; she hath lotos blossom  
For capitals of her hypæthral fane,  
Quiet in heaven, tremulous in the river:  
Where, sundering flowing phantoms of the  
stars,

Boats glide by night, aslant on broider'd sail,  
Freighted with youth, and love and loveliness:  
Balmy night breezes, all alive with song,  
Laughter, and rhythmic plashing of light oars  
(While coloured lamp-lights lambent on the  
ripple

Stream from fair vessel, or embower'd shore);  
Rustle tall fountain'd palms among the stars;  
As strange slim forms of a most ancient age  
Land on pale quays of that so stately temple,  
Sonorous with a gorgeous ritual.—

Now on a roofless column builds the stork!  
Here, they believe, slumbers a mighty god,  
Osiris, Love incarnate, and the Judge;  
Also the Solar orb, and sacred Nile;  
Who, with moon'd Isis and her little child,  
Shadoweth forth a triune Deity.

His awful name none dare to breathe aloud:  
An oath avails to bind for evermore  
One who hath sworn "by Him that sleeps  
in Philæ."

Most ancient realm of all this ancient earth,<sup>2</sup>  
Thought faints to sound thine hoar antiquity!  
Europe and Asia were not when thy form  
Brooded in solemn grandeur, as to-day,  
Over dark ocean! when Dicynodon,  
Ancestor of thy huge Leviathan,  
Ruled over mightier seas and estuaries;  
When melancholy vapours veil'd strange stars,  
Ere man's wan yearning unavailing eyes  
Awoke to wonder! ere the cataclysm  
Rent all thy rocks, and summon'd forth the  
rivers . . .

. . . When came the Negro? — and the  
dwindling Dwarf?

I have found bones of immemorial age:  
Their living families surround me now!

Wilds more unknown than yonder ghostly  
Moon,  
Beyond the bounds of Earth! whose ruin huge  
Of awful mountain, Albategnius,  
Or Döerfel, whose abysses of dead gloom  
Herschel in his enchanter's glass reveal'd!

Africa! vast immeasurable Void,  
Where no imperial march of History  
Solemn resounds from echoing age to age!

Haunt of light-headed fable and dim dream !  
To whose fierce strand the Heaven-shadowing  
bird,

Enormous Roc, long deemed a wild romance,  
Was wont to fly of old from Madagascar !—  
In whose blue seas floats fragrant ambergris ;  
Whose shores are blushing corallines most  
rare,

Where ocean fairies wander mailed in gems,  
Silently gliding through the branching bowers  
While far inland strange palaces are piled  
Profusely with pure ivory and gold<sup>3</sup>—  
No lynx-eyed peril-affronting pioneer,  
Since the beginning, until yesterday,  
Dared violate thy sultry somnolence,  
Couch'd, a grim lion in thine ancient lair ;  
Sullenly self-involved, impenetrable !  
Or if one ever bearded and aroused,  
Thy winds have spurned his unrevealing dust !  
Yea, in thy fiery deserts, in the pomp  
Of lurid evenings, crimson, warm, like blood,  
Thou dost devour thine own dark children,  
crouch'd  
About thy cruel knees, dark Africa !

## CANTO II

Yet mine are higher, holier purposes ;  
For I will cleave this darkling continent,  
As with a sword of intellectual light ;  
Lead these lost children to a living Father,  
And tell them of a Brother who has died.  
Yea, if my nature's weakness have rebell'd  
Against what seems the world's indifference ;  
Men treading their unarduous wonted round  
Of common care, oblivious of mine,  
Who battle alone, afar from all ; who waste,  
Ignobly sinking here in sight of goal,  
For bitter need of help I hoped from men,  
At leisure in their calm abounding homes ;  
Bales for exchange or tribute ; healing herbs ;  
Wherewith to calm this fire within my veins,  
And tame the ravening hungry heathendom—  
Thou knowest, O Lord, my prime solicitude  
Was for the work Thou hast to me unworthy  
Confided in Thy Providence unachieved,—  
And yet I know the Holiest never fails

For lack of service ; but allows to each  
The measure He in wisdom hath ordain'd.

For all the land is foul with monstrous  
wrong,  
And desolation of the sons of Hell.  
Surely the long long wail of human woe  
Ever ascends from all our earth to heaven !  
But here the mist of blind unending tears  
Hangs undissolving, and abolishes  
Yon very Life-Light from His shining halls,  
And hides the Father from his orphan'd sons.  
Hell is let loose ; and jubilant cruelty  
Tortures a feeble lowly-witted race,  
Poor fallen outcast of humanity ;  
Inflames the lurking salvage brute that haunts  
A wilding blood to fratricidal war,  
To thrall its very kindred, for the sport  
Of paler large-brain'd fiends, the common foe,  
And glut their markets with the flesh of men.  
Shoot them and drown them ! from convul-  
sive arms  
Tear small sweet clinging babes, and fainting  
brides

From lovers, who with unavailing life  
Stain them in falling, or themselves enslaved,  
Yoked, goaded, pinioned, tramp the burning  
wilds,  
To bleach with beast-gnawn bones the  
wilderness ;  
Or huddled in a slaver's pestilent hold,  
Writhing and raving, rotting while alive,  
Are flung to gorge sleek monsters of the sea !  
Lo ! in dusk offings of ensanguined seas,  
At sunset doth the torpid slaver droop  
Her guilty sail ; while evil strangers brand  
Dark women on a golden strand with fire ;  
Who are mute with endless woes unutterable !

Nay ! the long wail of wounded innocence  
Hath ne'er been squandered on a voiceless  
Void !

But every tear of every helpless child  
Sinks in a warm unfathomable Love :  
And armèd Righteousness awaits her hour,  
Albeit Her lightning slumber in the cl ud.  
These human shambles shall be purged from  
blood :

This charnel of the world shall reek no more,  
 Plague-spot of all the starry universe!  
 For I will flash the light of Europe's eyes  
 Full on the tyrant, till he quail and cower,  
 And vanish, a mere snowflake in the sun.  
 England, inviolate Ark of Freedom, launch  
 Thy thunder as of old; and hurl them low!  
 Fulfil thy mission! fallen heroes want  
 Yonder in heaven their crown of blessedness,  
 Till the last bondsman clasp unfetter'd hands  
 O'er the last slaver, whelmed beneath the  
 wave!

But I abide until my task be done.  
 And if they slay their mortal enemy,  
 It is the Lord who calls, and it is well—  
 When they had thought to murder; reft  
 from me

All I most cherished on a former day;  
 Killing my converts, even the little ones,  
 Or sweeping them into captivity;  
 I said, "I am not less resolved than they:  
 They do but save me wills and codicils!"  
 I turn my face indeed, as they intend,  
 From this my labour of long years o'erthrown;  
 And yet not homeward, baffled as they deem—  
 For lo! my face is toward the world unknown,  
 That seem'd almost the very world in sooth,  
 "From whose dark bourne no traveller re-  
 turns."

I take the plunge, and I am lost in night!  
 Lost to the life and tumult of mankind:  
 No voice may reach me from the homes of  
 men;

No voice of mine may penetrate to them.  
 Five times twelve moons have filled their  
 horns and waned;  
 My memory is failing from the world;  
 Only a ghostly rumour murmurs low  
 How one has seen a strange white wanderer,  
 Somewhere inland; none certainly knows  
 where;

And one more rumour whispers, he is dead.  
 Empires may rise and fall; great wars may  
 thunder;

And peace may follow war: and I not know,  
 More than the drown'd who slumber in the  
 sea—

Vea, have they ruin'd me at Kolobeng?  
 Behold I wrest from them all Africa!

For I will never cease from journeying,  
 Until the length and breadth of all the  
 land

Shine forth illuminate from shore to shore!  
 My life is one long journey; and I love  
 Peril, and toil, and strange vicissitude;  
 Exploring all the wonder of the world  
 On sea and land; wonder for evermore;  
 And all the marvellous miracle of man.

I am urged ever by a restless ghost,  
 And may not fold my hands in tranquil sleep.  
 Yet when we have grown old, we want the  
 glow

Of our own generous children in their prime,  
 Warming our twilight; they love thought  
 for us,

As we of old for them; their little ones  
 Play, like a dear last dawn, around our age;  
 And I too long to be at home again  
 By the sweet firelight of my northern land!  
 At Christmas-time, the room is bright with  
 green,

And far bells faintly peal athwart the snow:  
 Then quiet firelight, wavering with soft sound,  
 Pleasantly ruddies gold and silver hair:  
 But in the summer, little children sing  
 Anear a shimmer of slim aspen leaves,  
 Fluttering with sound of summer rain.  
 Ah! shall I never cease from journeying?  
 Urged ever onward by a restless ghost,  
 I may not fold my hands in pleasant sleep!

When I surmount some unfamiliar height,  
 Behold! an alien realm mysterious  
 Unroll'd in twilight! ghostly, drear, and wan;  
 Stain'd with what seem huge bombs of  
 shatter'd iron,

Hurl'd from a weird infernal enginery.  
 And then I muse what eerie living things  
 Dwell far beyond among the mists of night—  
 Whether the wanderer may wander on  
 For ever in the waste, hearing no sound,  
 Save of his own footfall; or yonder dwell  
 Dark unimaginable human lives;  
 Wearing what uncouth forms, allied to some

Misshapen horrors of the forest wild—  
 Weird startling mockery of immortal man ;  
 Shocking the soul with chill mistrustful fear,  
 And doubt of her pre-eminent destiny—  
 Brutebrow'd, brutemaw'd, huge hirsute prodigies,  
 Challenging with a vast appalling roar  
 Whoso disturbs their monstrous monarchy !  
 Dark unimaginable human lives,  
 Ever alone in this most ancient realm,  
 Immured in a stupendous sepulchre,  
 Afar from man's tumultuous chariot-race  
 Of sounding splendour ; somnolent aware  
 How the dull tide of dim inglorious years  
 Moves ever foul and lurid with the scurf  
 Of ruin'd blood, and gold, and scalding tears !

Some veer small restless, rambling, ape-  
 like eyes ;  
 Their clicking gibber mimics flittermice ;  
 A skeleton people plucking roots and berries  
 For starved subsistence, grubbing shallow  
 holes,  
 Or sheltering in borrow'd dens disused. . . .  
 What people lies before me ? some affirm  
 That there be men sepulchred verily  
 In subterranean chambers like the dead ;  
 Burrowing human moles, fleeing from light,  
 By their free choice, and immemorial  
 Usage ; though Rumour murmurs her wild  
 tale  
 Ever with a light head confusedly.

Shall I behold some dark terrific cave,  
 Reeking with bats, and owls, and doleful  
 things,  
 High among crags of a precipitous mountain,  
 Strewn with fresh bones of men, that hideous  
 ghouls  
 In human form, foul anthropophagi,  
 Have gnawn for food ; a loathsome den  
 defiled  
 With dripping human members, torn for  
 meat ?  
 A desolate wind howls ever dolefully  
 Around the dismal open mouth of hell,  
 Howls like a murdered man's avenging soul !  
 While among boulder-ruins of the mountain

Climb beasts obscene, scenting a horrid feast !  
 At night a thunder of great lions rolls,  
 Rebelling from basalt precipices :  
 At night a fervour of infernal flame,  
 With cruel yells of hellish revelry,  
 Affronts pale stars ; what time the unearthly  
 fiends  
 Grimy, and gash'd with knives, and foul with  
 earth,  
 Squat mumbling bodies of lost travellers,  
 Whom they decoying fell'd with monstrous  
 clubs.  
 But underneath the floor of their black vault  
 Deepens a hollow murmur, far withdrawn  
 Within the haunted heart of the dread  
 mountain.  
 It may be mutter'd wrath of slumbering fires ;  
 It may be secret waters wandering ;  
 But they believe it of another world ;  
 And shuddering pour libation to the god.

Sometimes by night a mightier thunder even  
 Than thunder of roaring lions, like an ocean,  
 Bursts all the boundaries of ruinous heaven  
 In one wild flood of universal flame,  
 With sound as of upheaval of adamant ;  
 Towering wrath of Powers immeasurable,  
 And roll'd war-chariots of tremendous cloud :  
 Sound the great mountains in their chasms  
 and craters,  
 Bastions, and inviolable towers,  
 Rebellow ; hurl abroad ; mutter in gloom ;  
 Brood over in their dim and sullen souls.  
 Perpetual seas of broad purpureal flame,  
 With intervals of momentary night,  
 Dark as the darkness of a man born blind,  
 Possess the sky's unfathomable concave ;  
 Wherein appalling growths of more intense  
 Fire with seven branches, like gigantic trees,  
 Spring up and vanish ! . . .  
 Behold yon perpendicular crags, like flame,  
 Whose melaphyre and porphyry condor crests  
 Threaten the valleys ! whose profound ravines  
 Of deadly twilight ne'er a sun may see,  
 Unsoften'd of a tiniest herb or flower !  
 Now furious torrents toss white manes of foam  
 Down their long solitudes ; the firmament  
 Sunders, and pours dense watery deluges,

Illuminate with deluges of light ;  
Howls the tornado ; 'tis the reign of chaos !  
Great lions lashing tails in grim despair,  
Mingling their roar with elemental thunder,  
Climb from the floods, or struggling drown  
therein !

Ah ! would the blinding falchion of swift  
lightning,

That crimson wounds the mountain flank,  
but hurl

One of those loosen'd bounding blocks of  
rock,

So as to stop for ever the black mouth  
Of that infernal cavern of the fiends,  
Where still a madden'd laughter peals among  
Commutations of Divine wrath flying abroad,  
Reiterate from all their haunted halls !

Lo ! the tornado, and the levinbolt  
Have fallen upon yon tree's enormous bulk,  
Hard by the cave ; blasting, and wrenching it  
Loose from a cleft it grappled for centuries  
With serpentine huge roots ! it creaks and  
crashes !

Headlong it topples to the gulf that boils !

Some even tell a marvellous dim tale  
Of a tribe buried somewhere in the wild ;  
A satyr-race of cloven-footed men,  
Hairy and tail'd, with cloven feet like swine !  
Where are the Pigmies ? Homer sang of old  
Their yearly war with southward-flying  
cranes !

They wear enormous heads upon their  
shoulders,

They build their pigmy booths in dim recesses  
Of some impenetrable forest world !

Two travellers<sup>4</sup> lately came upon their traces.

Here are no mouldering monuments of  
glory,

Confused dim ruin of long centuries ;  
As though ashamed of human purposes,  
Suffering slow conversion to the ways  
Of soft-outlined harmonious natural things,  
Flower and herb, and weatherhued worn  
stone.

Yet here Napoleons and Tamerlanes  
Have temper'd to a life-devouring sword

The drossy coarseness of humanity :  
Only their mighty Mother in more scorn  
Spurns in an hour the poor fantastic toil !  
A millstone, lost in verdure or black ooze ;  
Cairns upon hillsides ; fragments of rude jars ;  
Obsidian implements with fossil bones,  
Buried in bowels of unquarried rock ;  
These are the memories Earth retains of man.  
And yet the dead are in the forest mould,  
In branching wildernesses of rich gloom,  
In beast, and bird, and every living thing ;  
Yea, noble thoughts and deeds and souls for  
ever

Live in the deep eternal heart of God :  
They are reverberate in the lives of all ;  
Nor fail of full fruition and reward.<sup>5</sup>

Or shall I light on some barbarian  
Court, where high lords, like reptiles in the  
dust,

Grovel before a swarthy emperor,  
Throned all in gold ? who—from the burn-  
ing day

Shielded beneath a slave-supported silk  
Pavilion crown'd with some griffonian beast,  
That courts the sunlight—clothed in musky fur  
Of tawny spotted pard, cruel as he,  
And fig-bark beaten ; wrists with ivory bound,  
And slung with genets' tails ; a scimitar  
In his right hand ; red plumes of touraco<sup>6</sup>  
Among his oil'd elaborated curls—  
Glowers where the panther-supple guards  
advance,

Gory, dusk, jewell'd stalwart Amazons,  
At his feet rolling four distorted heads.  
Three skulls of kings, late mighty mortal foes,  
The monarch tramples ; a white ivory trump  
Of elephant tusk one blows, while others clang  
Dissonant gongs—but ah ! delicious groves  
Of fanlike palm, with waxen clusters fair,  
Cassia, myrrh, aloe, or ananas !  
Sweet amber-weeping mists of sensitive leaf,  
Wooing young sunlight to a delicate  
Dream in your soft warm zephyr-haunted  
hearts,

Empetall'd all with rosy peach blossom !  
Alas ! your mellow meek-lived innocence  
Blazes—A fierce intolerable gold

Breaks from breastplates of yelling murderers,  
 Dragging men, women, children, cowering  
 slaves,

From hence, and shelter of dank cane jungles,  
 Or wounding chaos of floral parasite ;  
 Convoluted wing'd serpents hung in gorgeous  
 gloom

Of tower-pillar'd forest high and hoar.  
 Rather they brave grim Terrors of the wild,  
 Stealthily prowling in moonlighted glades,  
 Where bubble sweet live waters musical ;  
 Huge grisly rivals crushing the stunn'd prey ;

Than surerfooted more unerring doom  
 Of hate fraternal, or implacable  
 Unholy violence of holy men,

Who, glutting a false god's bloodthirstiness,  
 Hale them, poor innocents, to sacrifice !

A king hath died ; and all dead emperors  
 They worship with lewd rites of cruelty,

By "watering" malignant evil dust

With what in its malignant vampire life

A vain, unstable, sanguinary soul

Relish'd to quaff from a foe's hollow skull,  
 More than all nectar—crimson human blood.

Yea, all the forest is one Golgotha ;

Skeletons, skulls, and cumbering carcasses,

Confused in one delirious dread dream !

Behold ! under yon ancient fetish tree,

Defiled with slaughter of five centuries,

Near an uncouth hewn stone (a phallic idol,

Begrimed, and hung with ghastly offerings)

A human victim horribly tormented !

One blade thrust like a bit between his jaws  
 Is strain'd and fasten'd there ; while many  
 knives

Lacerate all his gory frame ; he writhes

In agony ; for every living wound

Men have inflamed with diabolic art !

A pomp barbarian reigneth everywhere.

Nobles are slung in hammocks of rich silk,  
 Turban'd, and motley'd with quaint orna-  
 ment ;

Or rest their gold-encumber'd arms on heads  
 Of young lithe favourites, wearing cloth of  
 gold ;

Velvety smooth boys, eyed with slumbrous  
 fire ;

While others flit long gold-bound elephant-  
 tails.

Nigh to the monarch squats a hideous dwarf ;

And a white negro with two small pink eyes.

There is a trampling of arm'd cavalry ;

Barbs in rich mail, brightly caparison'd,

Mounted by swarthy horsemen, champ the bit,

Their riders quivering bronze assegais.

Hearken ! lewd revelry of dancing slaves,

Clashing with cymbal, tabor, castanet. . .

### CANTO III

Now in my far enchanted solitude,

My long life moves before me like a dream . . .

A child in Ulva, by the Northern sea,

I hear my father at our evening prayer,

And wild Gael singing of my grandmother.

A factory boy upon the banks of Clyde ;

For all the dissonant whirl of enginery,

I seize the food of learning, swiftly glancing

On some dear volume, laid upon a marge

Of the great spinning-jenny, as I pass,

Repassing ever in monotonous toil.

Fired with the splendour of the Lord of Love,

I long to unfurl His standard in the world :

For this I conquer arts laborious

Of serviceable healing ; and I grow

Adept in many a helpful handicraft ;

So full equipp'd, with arduous effort arm'd,

Living a temperate, reasonable life,

I bear a stout heart in a season'd frame ;

And emulous of illustrious pioneers,

Nor all unmindful of my sires austere,

I find myself i' the heart of Africa,

Helping the father of my bride to be.

My long life moves before me like a dream.

Behold ! our mission-house at Kolobeng :

These labour-roughen'd hands have builded it.

Nor for myself alone, but for the dark

Children of whom I am the father here,

I labour with strong hand, and heart, and soul.

I smelt rude ores ; and, fervid as large eyes

Of wrathful tigers, ringing iron yields

Upon mine anvil, hammer'd heartily ;  
While a bow'd native plies the goatskin  
bellows.

Lusty and hale, in manhood's vigorous prime,  
I startle the lone woods with stalwart blows ;  
While cream-white splinters fly from stubborn  
trunks,

Whose leafy pride falls headlong shattering ;  
My wife with finger nimble, dexterous,  
Moulding the while a hundred things at home.

There is a power enthralling human souls  
In equal dealings, in a lofty life,  
And lowly Love's unwearying ministry.  
One who inherits wisdom's treasure-house,  
And lives endowed with more than wonted  
grace

Of human faculty, may forge the gold  
Thereof to ignominious chains for men :  
Or twine the spiritual wealth, for their  
Deliverance, to cords of fair persuasion,  
Wooing their own endeavours after God.  
I wielding for the common use, not mine,  
A wider knowledge and a riper skill,  
Bestow'd free counsel or sincere reproof ;  
Tended my children when their bodies ail'd ;  
Lent a large heart to small perplexities,  
And simple tales of hourly human woe. . .  
. . . Have these a lowlier place allotted them?  
Yet they full surely have their post prepared  
In God's world-army : I will help them there.  
And I believe Jesus, the Man of men,  
Who is God's personal Love and Righteous-  
ness,

To be the one and only living Lord,  
Ruler alike of loftiest and least,  
Who, being reveal'd, will draw men unto Him,  
Each in his order and foreknown degree.

Sun of the living ! Hesper of the gloom !  
Surely Thy dusky children call for Thee,  
Unknowing whom they call—the wail re-  
sounds

Yet in mine ears of some funereal dirge  
For one beloved and vanish'd ; when the moon  
Wavers, as if in water, among leaves  
Of air-moved umbrage ; and a bark-built  
village

Lies in pale elf-light, with embowering palm  
And silvern plantain ; lonely forest shades  
Of over-frowning mountain-presences  
With stealthily mysterious forms aware.  
A bitter, long, monotonous human wail !  
More poignant than the cries of animal lives  
In unreverberate torture ; 'tis a wail  
Of one that's cloven to the depths of being,  
Maim'd in the vitals of an immortal soul.  
To me it seems alive with the wild prayer,  
This poor blind people hath so oft preferr'd,  
Crying with dumb yet infinite eloquence,  
“ O wise white man ! we pray thee give us  
sleep ! ”

So moans a hollow voice reverberate  
In long-drawn aisles of some sepulchral vault ;  
So moans the mystic growth Mandragora,  
Feeding on human ravage in a ruin  
Under a gibbet, when one pulls the root.  
How long have these then cower'd here in  
night,  
Mouthpieces of creation's misery,  
Wailing the world's wail in closed ears of God ?  
Whom now lament they ? some beloved  
friend,  
Chief, mother, bride, or child, who turn'd so  
cold

And strange and silent ; who may not abide  
Any more here in sweet sunlight with them,  
Or pleasant interchange of word and smile ;  
Gone forth for ever from them to the chill  
And cheerless realm of dreams impalpable.  
*Nevermore !* wails the burden of the strain,  
Burdening, as it seems, the very sleep  
Of a serene, fair incense-breathing earth !  
Ever it wails, low, dreary, and desolate,  
Oppress'd and muffled in a solemn sorrow ;  
A dirge world-weary, an old-world requiem,  
Trailing a slow wan length along the dust,  
Faint from the fount of immemorial tears ;  
A shadow, whose maim'd wings are plumed  
with awe ;

Sunken so deep from ghostly woes and fears,  
And broken hearts of all ancestral lives ;  
Phantoms aroused by a fresh living pain,  
To haunt the labyrinths of a living soul,  
And all the dark slow movement of the  
dirge !

One cabin stands a little way apart  
From all the rest upon a higher ground.  
Hence flows the wail! A man laments his  
son.

It is an aged warrior of the tribe,  
Who cowers, and sways himself upon the floor,  
Before an ember glow, that he beholds  
Only in dreaming: while a warm, red gleam  
Falls on the brown of rude encircling wall,  
Leaving a smoke-beclouded roof in gloom;  
Falls on barb'd javelins, and bows and arrows,  
And many hunting spoils of him who lies  
Near to his father, silent, stark, and cold;  
Ruddies the dark bare limbs of life and death.  
Rich furs are under and over the young form;  
Furs golden, furs of lynx, and ocelot:  
A small uncomely dog, with pointed ears,  
Presses his faithful body to the corpse.  
He was a comely boy, a mighty hunter,  
A bold young warrior, hope of all the tribe,  
And his infirm old father's only stay.  
When humid morning, chill, and pale, and  
wan,

Peers at those intervals between the boughs  
Of wattled wall, yon ashes will be grey,  
And still the old man be cowering by the  
dead!

Then the fond faltering sire must wander forth  
Alone; away from this un pitying herd  
Of yet unwounded men into the wild;  
There to fade slowly; with a feeble hand  
Plucking the berries, pulling up the roots;  
A living skeleton, grim woe and want  
In dim, scared eyes; until the wolf and raven  
Find him low laid, their unresisting prey!

The father's wail, like mournful waves un-  
seen,

Dies on the ear, and moans alternately:  
But later, figures gather in the open,  
Lamenting by a fire new-made the dead. . . .  
What wizard, with his incantation curst,  
Blasted the living; changing to a foe,  
And chilling fear, what was so amiable?  
Over the shoulder timorously glance  
They, at the very rustling of a leaf,  
To where the dead lie yonder in the forest,  
Strewn with some humble offerings they need:

Food, bowls, or ivory, arms, and hunting gear.  
Now beat loud tamtams; rattle hollow drums!  
So scare away the dim unhomey ghost  
With yells, and shouts, and drunken revelry. . . .  
"Ah! shadow-muffled panther, with fierce  
eyes,  
Prowling and mumbling yonder, art thou he?  
Ah! whispering leaves of darkling forest trees!  
Ye are ill whispers of infernal fiends!  
But we will drown the bitterness of woe,  
Frowning, foreboding, and bewildering fear!"

Behold! one stalks emergent from a cave<sup>8</sup>  
In yon far-off enfoldings of the hills,  
Where he has lain in some enchanted swoon,  
From when the moon her slender silver bow  
Lifted in blue night, till she rose an orb,  
Fully resplendent argent, even now.  
And he is haggard, worn, emaciate  
With vigil and with fast; a tawny hide  
Of some wild beast about his grimy frame,  
Charms of linked leopard's teeth upon his  
breast,

And leopard's liver for an amulet.  
With stained, hideous face, and jingling bells,  
And for a head-gear feathers of a bird,  
He sits among the mourners by the fire.  
Then all gesticulating chaunt a prayer:  
Till he, the prophet, fearfully convulsed,  
Falls like a corpse; but all the people cry:  
"Oh moon! Ilogo! spirit of the moon!  
Thine are the rivers,

Thine, Ilogo!

And the wilds and mountains,

Thine, Ilogo!

Reveal who hath enchanted our beloved!  
Oh moon! Ilogo! spirit of the moon!  
Hear us, Ilogo!"

And then the prophet from his death-like  
swoon

Arouses; from communion with the Moon.  
His dusky tribe are gathering around;  
Silence falls ominous on all intent;  
Till with harsh, croaking tones the devil  
proclaims:  
"Lamoli! it was *she* bewitch'd the dead!"  
Then all the naked savages roll eyes

Of fanatic fury, and, yelling horribly,  
Rush toward a leaf-thatched cabin, shouting  
hoarse :

"Let the Muave draught convict the witch!"  
They drag from thence a shrieking, innocent  
maid,

Who shivers with the pang of mortal fear :  
Hustled she drains among the cursing crew  
Ordeal poison from a gourden bowl,  
And, struggling piteous to reverse the doom  
Of her young murder, reels, and sinks, and  
falls ;

A hundred daggers mangling her fair life. . .  
Do these not need the Gospel of the Lord ?

Therefore I press right onward to my goal :  
Nor only for an hour, a month, a year ;  
But while life lasts, a warrior to the end,  
I wrest from Fortune all she would withhold.  
Even as a lion in his sultry lair  
Shakes off a myriad dew-drops from his mane,  
So have I spurn'd all hampering obstacle,  
Regarding danger with a quiet smile.  
O civiliser, shrink from Violence !  
Use Righteousness, and broad Humanity,  
With temperate firmness ; govern your own  
selves,

And so the people : yet never seem to fear ;  
Nor be ye loth to call auxiliar might  
Of muscular right arm, or deadly rifle,  
If these prove helpful in extremity.

Whose guiltless blood weighs on my soul  
to-day ?

I have not injured, mock'd, insulted any :  
I have been wanting in an English pride ;  
Nor feel the grand immeasurable gulf,  
Which every drunken subaltern may feel  
Between the veriest scum of England's isle,  
And of all infusorial "foreigners"  
The least unworthy—nay ; for even him,  
Whom, with all coloured races of the world,  
We from superior panoramic heights,  
With one judicial and exhaustive wave  
Of hand, may name and sweep from sympathy,  
Even the "*damn'd nigger*" I have not con-  
temn'd ;

Knowing that if the Lord regarded us

Proud English from "*damn'd nigger*" points  
of view,  
All would be damn'd indeed without reprieve.

A lion once, a mightiest male lion,<sup>9</sup>  
Whom my good rifle's bullet had but maim'd,  
Sprang in his wrath ; one huge and ponderous  
paw,  
Striking my shoulder, hurl'd me under him.  
Over me stood the vast dilated beast  
Growling ; his paw weigh'd on my shatter'd  
shoulder ;  
His great eyes glower'd ; his fangs gleam'd  
terrible ;  
Like a simoom, his breathing scorch'd my  
face ;

With tawny wilderness of mane aroused,  
Frowning, aloft he swung his tufted tail.  
But God removed all terrors and all pain :  
When the brute shook me, numb indifference  
Stole over all my being, while I watch'd ;  
Yea, look'd into the formidable eyes !  
(So Love tempers inevitable blows  
Of Fate for all the sons of suffering :)  
A comrade fires ; the lion springs on him ;  
Then fainting staggerers,—ponderous falls—  
and dies.

My long life moves before me like a dream.

We fell'd our way through groves im-  
pervious  
To healthful daylight ; realms of ravenous  
beast,

And venom'd snake secreted in the gloom ;  
Dismal dead trees enshrouded with the pale  
Dense life of lichen that hath stifled them ;  
Where lurks foul carrion, and agarics  
Fouler than carrion infect the air,  
'Mid noisome immemorial forest mould.  
We crush'd through deadlier thickets of rank  
growth,  
Whose blades colossal, notch'd with tearing  
teeth,  
Rise in dense walls above the ox-rider :  
These wound, entangle : while his lower limbs  
Are chill'd by shadowy dews that ne'er exhale  
From labyrinths of marshlight-haunted fen,

Dismal in dull death-gendering decay,  
 His head and shoulders burn with torrid fire,  
 Unshelter'd from a humid sultry sky.  
 My body and my raiment rent with thorns,  
 These lacerated feet refuse to bear  
 Me any further ; and I linger long,  
 A prisoner, waiting for my wounds to heal.  
 I have waded waist-deep in stagnating water  
 Of inundated equatorial plains,  
 And, swathed in saturated raiment, march'd  
 On, till hot air hath drain'd their moisture dry ;  
 Then, for how many torturing nights and days  
 Have I lain in the gripe of dire disease,  
 Clinging inveterate to devour my life ;  
 Evil inharmonious monsters ravening  
 Around these hells of my delirium !  
 When poor dark savage brothers tended me  
 With a white wife's untiring tenderness.  
 Some hearts, in sooth, of those my followers,  
 Quailing before long toil herculean,  
 Weary of peril in the very air  
 We breathe, a Protean never-sleeping peril,  
 Often immeasurable, unforeknown,  
 Shrank from my side ; yea, even some of  
 whom  
 I had hoped better things—but some, alas !  
 Were weak and worthless instruments, that  
 break  
 In hands of whoso trusts in a fair show :  
 And some were agents of the slave-trader,  
 Sworn to oppose, and drive me to despair.

Anon we travel

Over immense brown regions, no sweet rain  
 Rendereth mild with gracious influence :  
 A harsh rude waste, hated by man and beast ;  
 Where the foot sinks in scorching loose brown  
 sand  
 At every toilsome footfall ; while the sun  
 Strikes upward from a powdery parch'd earth,  
 Tanning and blistering : fiercely from on high  
 He smites upon bow'd heads of travellers,  
 Under arch'd awning of a labouring wain,  
 Or swaying slowly on a lean worn ox.  
 Poor oxen ! how they pant, and loll the  
 tongue,  
 Beaten of urgent teamsters with loud whips,  
 Pulling at wheels, that settle clogg'd with sand.

Shadows are sharply blotted on the ground :  
 Blue blazing daylight glares intolerable :  
 In a half-dreaming doze we journey on,  
 Still for our sole horizon the wan waste.  
 But when some watermelon loll'd before us,  
 How all rush'd eager on the priceless prize,  
 A large green ball upon an arid soil !  
 Slashing the cool pink pulp, that wells with  
 life,  
 And burying mouths in fair fresh nectar-  
 springs.

How terrible is thirst !

Days without water ! ne'er a watermelon  
 Even, to slake a moment hell's own  
 drought ! . . .  
 Hark ! shouts of joy break in upon the drear  
 Faint slumbrous silence of our fiery way :  
 All startled raise dim half-closed aching eyes—  
 Behold the lake ! our goal in sight ! Hurrah !  
 Lofty palmyras, palm, acacia,  
 O'er hazy waters purple in the sun,  
 Who sets below in solitary glory—  
 And surely on a pale horizon line  
 Tall sable horsemen galloping furiously !  
 See the slow oxen gaze aroused, and lowing  
 Hasten—behold black bulks of elephant,  
 And slim giraffes, show water to be near !  
 Shall we pursue ?

. . . They dwindle, waver, and change ;  
 All blows like slanting flame ; drifting divides.  
 It was the Satan's simulated water !  
 And only mist roll'd over a salt plain.  
 Yet the same region hath its wither'd herb ;  
 Wells that fill slowly when one deftly digs ;  
 Stunted green bushes, pools of rainwater,  
 Where skeleton women drink from ostrich  
 eggs ;  
 And even springs where tall lush grasses  
 grow.  
 Here the light zebra, and the swift wild ass,  
 Bound by elastic, and the shaggy gnu  
 Glares with red eye ; here bristle porcupines ;  
 Fussy ichneumon scuttles ; ratsels tumble ;  
 Ash-hued coarse-haired anteaters with long  
 snout  
 Lurk, like distortions of a curious dream.

My long life moves before me like a dream !

The cheerful bustle of the morning march !  
Shouts of the driver ; scuffling of loud beasts !  
Delicious swims and baths in some lone pool,  
With chestnut-colour'd leaves in the blue  
glass,  
And gorgeous birds reflected as they fly !

Appears the dear wild nightly bivouac  
In some dim forest,—I upon a couch  
Of woven rushes, under a furr'd hide,  
Shelter'd, it may be, by a roof of boughs.  
A grimy cauldron slung athwart the blaze  
Held our repast of savoury buffalo-meat  
(Ere sunset had my rifle slain the beast):  
But now my dusky troop surround the fire,  
That ruddies their swart forms and visages,  
Leaping to flame, with crackling faggot piled ;  
Subsiding soon to embers deeply glowing.  
Illumined smoke drifts fragrant, wavering  
Among mazes of long involved lianas,  
That seem in the red, hesitating light,  
To move alive, like pythons watching prey.  
There breathes a strange, delicious woodland  
smell ;  
Resinous amber glimmers to the stars ;  
Richly-dim blossoms, many-hued, immense,  
Droop fragrant heaven, a milky way of  
flowers,  
Wherein by day the nimble monkey hurries,  
And gorgeous parrot screams—now all is  
hush'd.

Yet there are weird, wild songs about the  
fire,  
Peals of a reckless, frolic merriment,  
Immoderate jests of nature's shameless child  
Dazed with the wassail-bowl, and fumes that  
rise  
From gurgling gourds, to steal bewilder'd  
sense,  
Sense light as thistle-down ; gay young  
buffoons,  
And elder fools allowing allusions free,  
With frantic, half-lewd gestures, bounden only  
By salutary fear of me, the Master. . . .

One tells a tale of perilous hunts with spear,  
Envenom'd arrows, shields of rugged hide :  
Relates the infuriate, unwieldy charge  
Of rough, one-horn'd, uncouth rhinoceros ;  
Or elephant snapping crush'd dishevell'd trees,  
With horrible, ear-bursting trumpet-bray.  
They tell of graceful, lithe, long-neck'd  
giraffes,  
Beating the plain with undulating flight ;  
Strong striding ostrich, spurning the burnt  
sand ;  
Of crawling dumb to leeward of a herd—  
Kudu, or eland wearing wreathen horns.

Or they relate some wonderful weird tale  
Of sorcery and superstition strange ;  
For one affirms he knew in such a village  
A man who turn'd at intervals to leopard,  
Lurking in dens to feed upon mankind ;  
Anon the beast's heart gather'd strong within  
him ;  
Burn'd to devour, to lap the blood of men ;  
Until the lust of death beyond control  
Drove him from home into the awful wild—  
Where, horror ! transformation swiftly grew  
From the inhuman heart to the man's mind,  
And human limbs—behold ! he crouches low,  
Fire-eyed, in act to spring—sleek, supple  
beast,  
His body of flame starr'd over with black  
night :  
Large-brain'd, blood-thirstiest of the infernal  
crew,  
Six human victims hath the wizard slain,  
Ere, man once more, the avengers torture him,  
Avoicing with bitter tears the sorcery. . . .  
Then many a negro, shivering, glances round,  
Timidly peering into forest gloom ;  
They pile more wood ; sitting in silence, till  
Another adds his marvel to the store.

Is it all fable ? is it all illusion ?  
Nay, doth not our most awful Universe  
Lead poor, mad mortals to the wilds alone,  
Into a barren wilderness of souls ;  
Mask'd in stern iron, prison'd in adamant,  
A fiery gulf between them and the world ;  
Forbidden dear embracings of their kind,

And mutually yielding thoughts of all?  
 Though girt with kindly, once familiar faces,  
 Lonelier they than are the lonely dead;  
 Or haunted only by fell fiends that scowl  
 Out of the very eyes of sleepless love!  
 God whirls them forth, and sets them in a  
 cleft

Of some ice-armour'd, cloud-robed precipice:  
 It snows, it howls; the everlasting mountains  
 Reel, crashing downward in the lightning's  
 eye:

God murmurs in their ears a Mystery  
 In tongues unknown, of import terrible,  
 That none may hear or comprehend but they;  
 Nor even they, but in maim'd cadences;  
 Wind-wilder'd murmurs of a music wild.  
 Ah! we all wander blindly in a dream!  
 Save for a revelation from the Lord.

They tell of our adventures by the road,  
 Wonderful, fearful, laughable or grave;  
 Gesticulating passionately gay,  
 Gesticulating with a monkey-mimicry.  
 One says that white men rise from the salt sea;  
 Verily live below the green water;  
 Whence comes our long, lank compromise for  
 hair:

The water we inhabit straightens it!  
 They mention my rough dog, poor old Chitani,<sup>10</sup>  
 Whom they affirm I cherish for his tail,  
 A tail that curls to right and not to left;  
 A tail by learnèd men discredited!

My trusty followers, my Makololo,  
 Astound the rest, relating how they toil'd  
 Athwart the continent;<sup>11</sup> arriving last  
 On a subsiding ridge of table-land;  
 Whence without warning burst upon their  
 view,  
 Ocean!

Vision never dream'd before—  
 On Him in His sublime infinitude,  
 Soliloquising awful in the gloom;  
 With one intolerable rift of light  
 Vibrating in the immeasurable waste  
 Of massy, torn, wan water that ascends,  
 To meet confusion of the hurrying cloud,

Releasing misty momentary rays;  
 While in this shifting gulf of utter light,  
 A snowy sail shows black as ebony.

“Spell-bound we pause: we had follow'd  
 this our Father,  
 Him of the honest heart, our wise white friend,  
 Through weal and woe, a weary, weary way,  
 From our own homes; in face of all the  
 people  
 Spake, while we journey'd through their  
 several lands,

That never white man brought an African  
 Here to the coast, save only to enslave;  
 But we would trust our Father; we had proved  
 Him well, and he had promised; yea, we  
 know

The English have good hearts for Africa!  
 And yet we pause at the sublime surprise.  
 For we had faith in what our Ancients told,  
 That the great World continueth evermore;  
 And now the World Himself saith unto us,  
 ‘Lo! I am ended! there is no more of me!’  
 Moreover, marching on with our sick Leader,  
 Whom we support, astounded we discern  
 Dwellings of white men, mountains of white  
 stone

With caves therein! and, yet more wonderful,  
 Upon the water, rolling near inshore,  
 A painted floating town, with fronting idol!  
 A giant bird with great white flapping wings,  
 Whose thunderous rebellion men that swarm  
 In windy, reeling heights are conquering  
 By strong enveloping of resolute arms!  
 Then, trusting to the word of our good Father,  
 Half timidly we climb the floating town,  
 Whose common soldiers, mariners, and chiefs  
 Pay joyful homage to our own dear lord;  
 And all of them have kindly hearts for us.  
 But round the wooden walls dark, iron mouths  
 Of demons gape; whence, being touch'd with  
 fire,

Leap thunderous lightnings, Genii clothed in  
 smoke!

Pointing to them, our Father said to us,—  
 ‘With these grim mouths we stop the sale of  
 men!’

And then our Father, very near to death,

Though his white friends would fain have  
borne him home,  
Would suffer not his children to pursue  
Alone their arduous perilous return :  
'My Makololo boys have served me well,'  
Said he, 'and I will not desert them now!'"

Well I remember, O my splendid Sea,  
How thy salt breath blew o'er me, as alive!  
After interminable deserts drear,  
And dank hot jungles of the savage race,  
To come upon thee, Ocean, unaware,  
Dear native element of all the free!  
With British tars, and British hearts of oak,  
And the old fiery flag upon the wind!  
Tears blind my vision—yonder England lies!  
A grey gull, in his strong deliberate flight  
Hover'd and slanted, dipp'd his breast in brine,  
Exulting in the wind and turbulent foam;  
While half the mortal languor left my limbs,  
And I rejoiced with him. From sea to sea!  
I traversed all the dark, blank continent;  
And proved it not, as timid idle dream  
Surmised, an evil waste unprofitable,  
Huge blot on God's most bountiful, fair  
world;  
Rather a promised land of living waters!  
Like that king's daughter in the fairy tale,  
Asleep, awaiting her Deliverer.

How clearly do mine inner eyes behold  
The dear, wild nightly bivouac of yore,  
When I was in my manhood's vigorous prime!  
If it were in the prairie, or the desert,  
Sinbad, my riding ox, with other oxen,  
Would lie beside the looming bullock-wain,  
Audibly ruminating, couch'd at ease  
Upon his shadow, in a luminous moon.  
If it were in a forest, such as last  
Appear'd before my musing memory;  
When I have heard awhile my followers' tales,  
Wearily close mine ears in first faint sleep,  
Half hearing only broken words, and names  
Of tribes or places, weird, and all germane  
To the mysterious realm of forest wild.  
But later still, silence inviolate reigns;  
Save for a low communing of weird wind  
Among high crowns of leafy ebonyes,

Moving and murmuring, while star-worlds  
pass over.

When I awake, dark forms are lying round:  
Firelight warms faintly mighty sylvan pillars,  
Rising from gloom to gloom: they seem to my  
Drowsed senses ancient phantoms of the night.  
Thousands of years, some say, the huge  
Mowana

Flourishing lives, while mortal men around  
Fall with his leaves, and wither at his feet.  
How could he tell of fleeting hopes and fears,  
Of myriad passing loves, and woes, and wars!  
Emmets and men, teeming and vanishing,  
In halls of stone, or tunnell'd, chamber'd hills,  
Or wattled huts, as here! men's thrilling lives  
Gleam, firefly-like, a moment wonderful;  
Frail, nor so blithe as yon fair living lights,  
That are and are not in the fragrant shade.

And since she died,<sup>12</sup> rapture of my young  
years,  
Love, and abiding pole-star of my life!  
A marble cross, that gleams amid the gloom,  
Shines ever in dim vistas of my soul;  
And I desire to lay my toil-worn limbs  
Under still leaves of some primæval grove,  
As she, my well-beloved, resteth hers.  
She sail'd from England, to divide my care,  
With brave Mackenzie's and another's wife:  
Alas! Mackenzie and his friend had fallen  
In the stern path of duty when they came!  
And these two white-faced women wept alone  
Over two very silent forest graves.  
Alas! how soon I wept beside another;  
For very soon my Mary went to rest.  
(Her venerable father, Moffat, only  
Is known among the tribes of Africa  
As my own Mary's father, as Ra-Mary.)  
The fever seized her, and she pass'd away:  
She pass'd at sunset on a Sabbath eve,  
And left my feet to wander in the shade.

Upon a gentle, green acclivity,  
Under a venerable Mowana tree,  
Garlanded with odorous flowers,  
Tranquil in the sunny hours,  
She sleeps in glory!

Orchards of mango basking in the south ;  
 Northward fair palm, and many a noble  
     growth  
 Of oriental forest tree,  
 Where silvern Leembayee  
     Wanders in glory ;

On his fair bosom many a sunny isle,  
 Calm as herself within the heavenly smile :  
 Upon the marble of her grave  
 Mowana shadows gently wave,  
     Waver in glory.

Pearly light clouds about his purple form,  
 High in the azure, deep, and wide, and warm,  
 Mount Morambala soareth high,  
 Serene in mountain majesty,  
     Dreaming in glory :

Gleam forth, O marble, from the wilding  
     gloom !  
 Shine, O white cross, upon the martyr's tomb !  
 Faithful toil, long-suffering care,  
 Radiate over dark and fair,  
     Burst into glory !

#### CANTO IV

I cannot loathe nor scorn the colour'd man ;  
 Nor deem him far below my Master's love.  
 I know about the sutures of his skull ;  
 But I have proved him verily my brother.  
 And I have heard of Toussaint L'Ouverture !  
 (Perchance I am not so fastidious  
 As those who have great genius for words ;  
 Yet we dumb doers crave some standing room,  
 O ye, so deft and dazzling with the tongue !)

Well I remember, after all my toil,  
 When within grasp of a momentous prize,  
 Earth seem'd to glide from under ; all was  
     failing,  
 Even as now ! my very faithful friends—  
 Who had plunged in drowning floods to  
     rescue me ;  
 Who had interposed their bodies to avert

The deadly javelin aim'd against my life ;  
 Who, pressing princely favours on my need,  
 With more than counsel, with material aid,  
 Further'd my humanising pilgrimage ;<sup>13</sup>  
 When Christian Levites would have passed  
     me by,  
 Jingled their gold, and sneer'd " Utopia !"—  
 My well-tryed Makololo, *they* desert me !  
 Shrinking at last from more long sacrifice,  
 Bitter and boundless, it may be unavailing—  
 I shall not reach those Lusian settlements  
 Upon the long'd-for coast ! all urge return.  
 . . . Return I will not !  
 " Return *ye* then, my people ! I will go  
 Alone, if so indeed it needs must be !"  
 With heavy tread, with heavier heart, I enter,  
 Weary and fever-stricken, my small tent  
 Under a tamarind ; and I lean my head  
 Upon my hand to offer up a prayer.  
 Silence is all around me in the noon—  
 Yet only for a little—then I hear  
 Footsteps approaching ; timidly one peers,  
 And sees me by the tent-pole ; first the one,  
 Then more, have push'd the canvas fold aside ;  
 Falling upon me like repentant children,  
 Sobbing, with tears they pray to be forgiven :  
 " We never meant it ! We will never leave  
     thee !

Our own kind Father ! be of better cheer !  
 Where'er thou leadest, we will follow thee !"

And that poor African, who when I sail'd  
 For England supplicated to be taken !  
 It was with bleeding heart I said him nay.  
 I told him he would perish of the cold  
 In my bleak country, but he sobb'd with tears :  
 " O let me come, and perish at your feet !"  
 Sebweku had a stronger claim than he.  
 Alas ! Sebweku !  
 The sea was rolling mountains high, when all  
 Embark'd at Kilimane in a boat.  
 Ascending gliding turbid mountain-slopes,  
 Their toppling hissing foamy summits broke  
 Drenching upon us, and submerged our bark :  
 Giddily slid we deep into the trough,  
 Whose seething waterfalls hid all the masts  
 Of that great vessel which awaited us :  
 We struck the massy bottom with a shock,

That made our stout planks quiver ; slant-  
ing up  
Another beetling journeying watercliff,  
Second of three great billows lightning-  
crown'd.  
Poor Sebweku, so valiant on land,  
So wise and skill'd in dealing with the many  
Tribes of his continent, strove strenuously  
To be as brave in my fierce water world,  
Ghostly, unknown, terrific unto him :  
Yet as that awful play of leaping foam  
Struck us, and nearly swept us all from life.  
He clutch'd my knees, crying with face of fear,  
Faintly illumed by a poor phantom smile,  
Like a wet timid gleam among wan clouds,  
"Is this the way you go ? is this the way?"  
But when we had made a perilous ascent  
Into the British war-brig anchor'd near,  
His fresh fantastic marvelling child-soul,  
So little tutor'd, ponder'd evermore  
On all he saw within the war vessel ;  
Cannon, great coils of cable, ponderous chain,  
Hammocks, and kitchen of the floating town,  
Her sailors, and well-order'd soldiery ;  
On the interminable water world,  
Strewn with dark swimming snakes, and  
plants ; where roll  
Dolphins and whales ; where azure fishes fly,  
And birds gleam in a momentary ray  
Out of dull storm that raves among the  
shrouds.  
Reeling to starboard and to larboard, he,  
By swaying lamplight, in the midnight hour,  
Lies wakeful, hearing labouring timbers groan,  
Or shouted orders, piercing all the roar ;  
And clear struck bells, dividing hour from hour.  
He, creeping up lone glimmering hatchway  
stairs,  
Beholds a gleam from that mysterious shrine  
Where, under lighted crystal, a slim needle  
Trembles for ever toward the hidden pole ;  
Notes a bronzed mariner's strong vigilance  
Revolving with both arms the straining wheel,  
Beyond wet decks, wash'd over by fierce seas ;  
Beholds tall masts, more tall than forest kings,  
Robed in broad shadowy windy sails and  
booms,  
Circling among wan stars in rifts of cloud.

All made him welcome, and they liked  
him well ;  
But the new wonderworld inflamed his brain ;  
Kept his mind whirling ever night and day ;  
Until, when we approach'd Mauritius,  
A steamer steam'd from forth the harbour  
mouth—  
Wonder of wonders to poor Sebweku !  
Fiery smoke outbursting from her funnel.  
She churns the water with a rushing wheel :  
Slanting and swiftly swims upon the wave :  
He cries : "It is some fiend of the wild sea !"   
Alas ! my friend. . . .  
. . . When we are calmly moor'd,  
In a mad frenzy plunges—and is drown'd !

And yet my negroes at a later day<sup>14</sup>  
Proved boldest, skilfullest of mariners.  
Perilously braving mountainous ocean-waves,  
And howling winds, our tight but tiny craft,  
*Lady Nyassa*, from Mozambique flew,  
Resolved to harbour in far Asia.  
Mine own hands ruled the helm, my sleepless  
eyes  
Watching the needle : often would we clutch  
Fast, lest some phantom billow whirl us forth :  
Hurrying, swirling, billows playing with us,  
Whose foam-fangs gleam'd in night's chaotic  
war !  
But my blithe monkey-nimble negro boys,  
While our spars heaving dipp'd in hissing sea,  
Climb'd undismay'd, and clinging, deftly  
reeved  
A rope, at my bawl'd orders, through a  
block ;  
With ebony heads and frames immersed in  
brine,  
Held their brave breaths ; then with the rope  
between  
White, shining teeth, return'd triumphantly.  
When by a miracle we made the port ;  
Nor founder'd, leaving ne'er a living soul  
To tell the tale ; among tall mast-forests  
In that great hazy harbour of Bombay,  
None could discover, though they sought for  
long,  
Where our wee "Lady" had bestowed her-  
self !

How glorious and amiable some scenes  
 Of gorgeous loveliness, and human joy,  
 That pass before mine inner eyes to-night !  
 For there is unsophisticated joy,  
 Yea, hardy virtue in rude nature's child ;  
 And there are sins, with poignant miseries,  
 Our subtler, jaded brains impart to him.  
 Witness, the desolation and despair <sup>15</sup>  
 Of guileless peoples, beautiful and kind,  
 Basking in smiles of bounteous mother Earth,  
 Wrought by pale Spaniards ; whom they held  
     divine,  
 Descended from the crystal firmament,  
 In silks and flashing armour, on white wings  
 Of golden galleons ; offering on their knees  
 Flowers and fruits and spices of their isle !  
 And you, ye murderers of Pattenon !  
 Not poor blind islanders, but English fiends !  
 Beware, O ye who follow after me,  
 Of how ye deal with this, mine Africa !

Methinks I hear some solemn state palaver,  
 Held in the grand unwall'd assembling-place,  
 Thatch'd with bamboos and branches, when  
     blue morn  
 Glows golden, while cool shadows at the doors  
 Of a leaf-bower'd village minish fast.  
 Morn lies a lake of light amid the bloom  
 And billowy wealth of forest foliage ;  
 Young Sun, ascending, shines on thatch like  
     snow,  
 Revealing veins of herbs, and draining them ;  
 Glancing among high senatorial boughs  
 Of feathery tamarind, or mahogany ;  
 While dews of slumber rustle rainbow rain  
 In sylvan, solitary silences  
 Of Nature's own cathedral sanctuary.  
 A spear is in the dusky orator's hand,  
 And spears are planted black athwart the day ;  
 Dark bearded elders hearken solemnly,  
 Resting on logs, all polish'd from long use.  
 Perennial founts of eloquent, warm words  
 Are these untutor'd children of the sun !

Now reigns the blazing furnace of full noon :  
 And save for little rills that want no sleep,  
 Silence, before the intolerable glory,  
 Falls on a cowering world of beast and man.

Bird-song has waned, and even the strident  
 Cicala sleeps ; a rare bee drowsily  
 Explores a twilit labyrinth of flowers ;  
 Delicate blossoms dallying in warm airs,  
 Bowing and yielding to the velvet lover ;  
 While heaven-blue elves with pulsing fans  
     alight  
 Over a ruin of red leaves, or sail  
 From light to shadow, like a jubilant  
 Song, failing in a tenderer low minor.  
 Gorgeous insects of metallic gleam  
 Waver, and glance, and glimmer on the fronds.  
 Low, murmurous sound pervades all emerald  
     aisles,  
 As though the floral earth and leaves were  
     breathing.  
 Life teems ! a myriad hidden mandibles,  
 Amid lush herbage, under moss and loam,  
 Clear away life superfluous, and death.  
 Gorgeous fungi here and there reveal,  
 Where sun can pierce, traversing shadows  
     thrown  
 Athwart them from some silken spider's line,  
 To and fro glancing when a zephyr breathes ;  
 Bending long grasses wheresoe'er it hangs.  
 And hark ! the honey-bird invites to steal  
 Delicious honey-combs from hollow boles.

Hearken again !  
 A sound, how plaintive and melodious,  
 Swells in the green gloom ! it is like one note  
 From a sweet vibrant lyre—a hidden bird !

Women have gone, with infants slung  
     behind them,  
 Toward a spring, light pitchers gracefully  
 Poised on their heads by steadying of dark  
     arms  
 Curl'd over ; or they bruise with iron hoes  
 The hopeful soil ; plant yams and manioc ;  
 Pound in wood mortars these, or maize and  
     millet ;  
 Hem with some thorn, or fish-bone for a  
     needle,  
 And fibres of a leaf ; weave grassy cloths  
 In looms, or spin with immemorial spindle.  
 Some men have gone with quiver, targe, and  
     spear,

To hunt the beast for food ; some loll at ease,  
Like their own gourds, luxuriously idle ;  
Listless and vacant dumb black animals,  
Who spurn the accursed yoke of thought and  
toil—

They never roll the stone of Sisypheus !  
No fool's ambition ever goads their lives  
To rouse a restless rumour, while they roll  
Into fate's mortal darkness, and to leave  
A hollow murmur for a little time  
In some poor space of insignificant earth !

Now Sun steals westward ; and his fading  
light  
Glows golden, while cool shadows at the  
doors

Of leaf-embower'd villages are long.  
Burning he falls into the forest sea,  
Inflames leaf-billows with purpleal fire ;  
Drawing down souls to caves of the under-  
world ;

Whence in twelve hours he royal will arise  
From holy nenuphars upon the river !  
Fragrance and song, released from royalty  
Of his fierce presence, timid lift their heads ;  
Grey parrots crying flutter home to roost.  
Hunters return, with many a gay halloo,  
And whoop light-hearted, bearing various  
game,

About whose way hilarious women throng,  
Calling them by pet names, and fondling  
them,

Prattling, intent to hear of all the sport.  
Boys in gourd bowls bring frothy plantain  
wine

From cool leaf-cellars in low boughs of trees.  
Presenting it with clapping of their hands :  
Anon there smokes a savoury repast,  
Viands of venison, nuts, and season'd yams.

Dancing and singing under tender stars,  
In serene purple air ! a rising moon  
Charming all harshness from the fuming flanne  
Of resinous torch, and lowlier village fires,  
Mild as evanishing fireflies in the shade !  
A night of love for lovely youths and girls,  
Of revelry, and wine and flute playing,  
Psaltery, reed, marimba, or cithern ;

Rude sires of more harmonious instruments,  
String'd with a root, a snake-skin strain'd  
athwart—

One sang me a small song about the dance.

The dance ! the dance !  
Maidens advance  
Your undulating charm !  
A line deploys  
Of gentle boys,  
Waving the light arm,  
Bronze alive and warm ;  
Reedflute and drum  
Sound as they come,  
Under your eyelight warm !

Many a boy,  
A dancing joy,  
Many a mellow maid,  
With fireflies in the shade,  
Mingle and glide.  
Appear and hide,  
Here in a fairy glade :  
Ebb and flow  
To a music low,  
Viol, and flute and lyre,  
As melody mounts higher :  
With a merry will,  
They touch and thrill,  
Beautiful limbs of fire !

Red berries, shells,  
Over bosom-dells,  
And girdles of light grass.  
May never hide  
The youthful pride  
Of beauty, ere it pass :  
Yet, ah ! sweet boy and lass,  
Refrain, retire !  
Love is a fire !  
Night will pass !

I came to pleasant places on my way !  
Lawns of deep verdure by a silvern water :  
Wind-waved savannahs flush'd with floral  
bloom,  
Clouded with saffron or cerulean flowers,  
And little silken blossoms of pure snow,

Dying in dews of every dying eve,  
 Living in all revivals of the morn.  
 Here women singing reap the golden grain,  
 Or bind in sheaves; here flourish cotton-  
 fleece,  
 Rice, tendrill'd peas, and pulse, and sugar-  
 cane;  
 While mottled kine, knee-deep in flowering  
 grasses,  
 At milking time low to their prison'd heifers,  
 And merry kidlings frisk at bower'd doors.  
 The men under some fig's rich canopy  
 Sit weaving limber baskets, or a weir,  
 And fishing-creel.

Slight palisades preserve  
 Dark jasper-jewell'd women, as they fill  
 Their pitchers in the river, from the foul  
 Scaled alligators that abound below,  
 Watchfully lurking underneath wan water;  
 Dim treacherous shadows, motionless like  
 stone,  
 Monsters who linger from primæval time,  
 Ere man appear'd to rule—

Nay, some still pay them tribute of a prayer;  
 Offer their very little ones to soothe  
 And sate bestial malign divinities!  
 These have their priest, temple, and sacrifice,  
 Or priestess, with observances impure:  
 So have green serpents, tongued with flicker-  
 ing fire,  
 Whose stealthy glide flames out in torturing  
 hells. . . .  
 . . . Are these dark aberrations of the soul  
 Terrible legacies bequeathed to men  
 By some forefather of Egyptian race,  
 Who bore the ritual of his ancient realm  
 To these far wilds of Ethiopia?—  
 Bringing his cast of feature, and the modes  
 Of intricate hairbraids involved with bark;  
 Manners of tilling earth and harvesting,  
 Spindles, and ways of weaving warp with  
 weft.—

Or was it some primæval ancestor,  
 Common to all, whom so the Lord made wise,  
 And whom in turn the Enemy beguiled?  
 But still, upon broad shoulders of strong men,  
 A sacred ark is borne at the full moon

Among dark faces of adoring crowds,  
 Moonsilver'd, lit from lamps of gourd or  
 melon,  
 Amid glad music and loud clapping hands;  
 Even as in Saïs, at the Feast of Lamps,  
 Far away in dim hollows of the past!

Among rare visions of celestial glory,  
 And all responsive splendours upon Earth,  
 In such a scene as these, in such a river,  
 Behold! a maiden in her earliest prime  
 Bound to a stake, bare-limb'd upon a bank,  
 The ripple washing over her slim ankles,  
 And lovely swaying lilies kissing them.  
 She horror-frozen waits the horrid doom . . .  
 . . . A hideous head protrudes from forth  
 the shoal:  
 There is a whirl of monstrous dragon-tail . . .  
 . . . Andromeda's red blood afflicts the river;  
 Whom no fair wingèd Perseus may save!

I travell'd over many lakes and rivers,  
 In floating trees men hollow'd with an adze  
 For a canoe, my rowers with wild song  
 Paddling or poling, in accordant time  
 Of oar and voice, chanting some ancient stave  
 Of river-song in tones Gregorian,  
 Solemn and strange, ancient as Pharaoh!

How wonderful it was to float along the  
 river!  
 Dreamily hearing water splash and gurgle  
 From my canoe's advancing sides and oars,  
 Washing among green rushes of the shore!  
 Wherein wing'd warblers, plumed in spousal  
 hues  
 Of green, gold, scarlet, sable, white and azure,  
 Flash'd, thrill'd, and warbled; here in the  
 Summerland,  
 Now in the latest of two fairy summers,  
 When there is snow in England—ah! and  
 bells;  
 With lovelier light and warmth of home and  
 heart!  
 Hark! how they sing to soft mates in nests  
 woven  
 Of green flags, nimble bills have sewn with  
 webs;

While, sunning them, they preen their little wings,

Showering drops that trickle down the stems!  
Earlier rains have fallen; a fresh air  
Fans clear and lucid now in morning hours;  
Vivid green pennons of tall rushes wave  
Athwart blue light, with dense papyrus reed,  
Wherein soft brown gazelles rustle and play  
'Neath hollyhock, brown bulrush, and flag-flowers.

A mighty river horse

Protrudes a shining snout; trumpets aloud,  
Blowing out spurts of water like a whale.  
"Pula, pula," calls the "Son-in-law of God";<sup>16</sup>

While ever and anon an ebony bird  
Rouses from his dim dreaming on the sand,  
And screaming harshly, wakes a long wild cry  
From some fish-eagle, widening vast brown wings.

In shoals grave marabouts, with red flamingoes,

Wade; and behold! yon bird on floating lotus  
Leaves walks among the holy white lilies,  
Dipping a glossy fold below the ripple.

A snowy ibis, a slim demoiselle,  
A tall grey heron, an egret of white plume:  
These, and the like, stand fairy sentinels,  
With wavering bright image down below,  
Silent before a twilit emerald  
Of river margin, radiant in bloom.  
Yellow milola, blue convolvulus,  
Whose vases seem to overflow with heaven,  
These all are haunts of lustrous dragon-fly;  
Gorgeous velvet moth, sipping the sweet;  
Of dappled bees, gold-dusted; butterflies,  
Wing'd like the train of Juno's heavenly bird.

Onward we glide, and twine meandering  
On a moss-colour'd water, till the gale  
Relieves my merry rowers; we expand  
A little sail, filling with soft sweet air,  
Like some soft bird's white bosom heaved with song,

White as a foam of waterfalls; we glide  
Merrily among wave-enchanted flowers,  
Glossily heaving while we gently pass;  
Or splendid twinkling trees, immersed in light,

From shadowy bosoms offering fruits of Eden;

Breathing a perfume as of Paradise  
From their soft islands; islands of the blest,  
Bower'd to the marge, re-echo'd in the water;  
With many a fleecy cloudlet sailing slow.  
Small richly armour'd quaint iguanas bask  
On every sunniest bough; while startled eyes  
Of glorious lithe beasts flash for a moment  
Out of the solemn sylvan opaline  
Of hoary forest boles, and swiftly vanish:  
Little agamas nod their orange heads;  
A lovely praying mantis, green as leaves,  
Rests on green leaves; and green chameleons.

We wind along; the waters rise from rain;  
Blue hazy hills arise, saluting us.  
Often, when we have doubled some fair cape,  
With thud and plash fall fragments of rich loam;

And as we round low river promontories,  
Crocodiles basking upon yellow sand,  
With dull green eyes, and huge obscene fang'd jaws,

Wake startled; gliding plunge into the flood;  
Where many a delicate-tinted pelican  
Stores silver fishes in his hanging pouch.

Wandering devious, many-mooded rivers  
Mazily saunter, with a floating flower,  
Or leaf, or bubble on their bosom borne;  
With labyrinthine silver in the blue;  
Indolent dimpling playful light and shadow;  
Now washing swiftly round about the roots  
Of guava, mango, fountainous cocoa-palm,  
Or palm that, veil'd in climbing green lianas,  
High over all the verdure lifts a spire.  
Among blithe rapids my dark boatmen wade,  
Merrily pushing; while at waterfalls,  
Pendent in green woods among roseate rocks,  
Pendent, like plumes of birds of paradise,  
They carry our frail bark upon their shoulders.

Sunset arrives: a stilly-flowing flood  
Glow, like blent molten metals brilliant,  
Dark and light green, crimson, purple and gold,  
Repeating heaven: as though yon gleaming beetles,

Swaying among the verdure, were afloat,  
One solid army of them, mail'd in glory.

I enter equatorial lakes, unknown  
To any European eyes before :  
Ngami, Bemba, Moero, Nyassa ;  
Slumbering in grand enfolding arms  
Of old volcanic mountain, tempest-crown'd !  
Profound and lonely children of the waters,  
Whom gorgeous vested giant forms o'er-  
frown,

Bastion, tower, inviolate precipice,  
Burying them from all-beholding Sun  
In sullen shadow, many hours a year.  
Ngami ! earliest lake mine eyes beheld ;  
On whose fair shores of old exultantly  
I stood, with my dear little ones and *her* !  
This inland sea, this noble Tanganyika,  
Where Burton came with Speke, whom Eng-  
land mourns,

Hath all his guardian mountains foliaged  
From wave to heaven ! magnificently robed  
In rich luxuriant foliage of Mvulé,  
And other alien blossoming tall trees,  
Bauhinia, tamarind, teak, and sycamore,  
Enfolding purple torrent-cloven ravines.  
While elsewhere long sheeny rapier blades  
Of green matete cane adorn the marge,  
With mangroves whose bare roots affect the  
fen.

One who rows softly, rounding promon-  
tories,  
When these high hills are overarch'd with  
azure,

Dipping his paddle in a light blue water,  
Beholds embower'd in sweet shingly coves  
Palm-nestled, hive-like huts and villages,  
Whose dwellers ply their busy crafts on shore,  
While fishing gear and boats adorn the  
strand . . .

. . . And what if this great water-gender Nile ?<sup>17</sup>  
For I have seen a Northward drift of boughs,  
With other floating waifs ; while Arabs tell  
How from far Northern limits of the lake  
A river floweth North—perchance to where  
Baker, with his heroic consort, came ? . . .  
. . . Where issueth else the mighty water  
forth ?

# MOSI-OA-TUNYA.<sup>18</sup>

Smooth river water holdeth softly furl'd  
Thee, hoarded wonder of the wondrous world !  
Ere thy tempestuous cataracts are hurl'd,  
Mosi-*oa-tunya* !

Twenty miles away thy sound  
Travels from the gulf profound  
Of thine earth-convulsing bound,  
Mosi-*oa-tunya* !

Five great cloudy columns rise,  
To uphold the rolling skies :  
Morning clothes with rainbow dyes  
Mosi-*oa-tunya* !

Awful phantoms in the moon  
Rise to thy tremendous tune :  
When the fiery evening falls,  
Hell sulphureous appals,  
While thy blazing thunder calls,  
Mosi-*oa-tunya* !

The huge Mowana, and the Mohonono,  
Like silvery cedar-trees on Lebanon,  
Wave, with light palms, upon the pleasant  
isles  
And shores, ere Leeambayee vanishes,  
As though annihilate in his proud career :  
Motsouri-cypress, yielding scarlet fruit ;  
All noblest equatorial trees adorn  
His mile-wide water, clear as a clear day,  
Gliding like lightning into the abyss.

Clear a moment, ere thou blanch  
Into a mile-wide avalanche,  
Snowfall lapsing twice the height  
Of Niagara in his might !  
Born of thy resounding day,  
Myriad meteors o'er thee play :  
There is an evergreen dark grove,  
Guarded by thine own awful love :  
Her inner melancholy no sun may move,  
Mosi-*oa-tunya* !

Tall ghostly forms of sounding cloud  
Clothe her in a rainbow shroud ;  
No bird of hers carols aloud,  
Mosi-*oa-tunya* !

Down the rock's tremendous face,  
Foam-rills, tremulous like lace,  
Flow from roots that grasp the place,  
To where thy vaporous cauldrons hiss ;  
But ere they may attain to this,  
Smoke roaring, whirl'd from the abyss,  
Licks them off precipitous stone,  
High into a cloudy zone,  
Mosi-oa-tunya !

Water and wind jamm'd in a chasm profound,  
Tortured, pent-up, and madden'd, with strong sound  
War in world-ruining chaos, fierce rebounding ;  
A wild tumultuous rumour, earth and heaven confounding.

After, the river rushes, a long green  
Serpent, convolved about dark promontories  
Of sternest basalt, in the unfathomable  
Chasm to and fro, a swift fork'd lightning-flash ;  
But all the promontories are crown'd with trees,  
Gorgeous blooming herbage and tall flowers.

On a green island, hanging o'er the flood,  
Even where it falleth, lovely flowers are wooed,  
And with eternal youth imbued,  
By a lapse of gentle rain  
From the cataract's hurricane :  
Love celestial in showers  
Falls from devastating powers !  
Under the foam-bow and the cloud,  
Here where thunders peal aloud,  
Human souls with trembling bow'd,  
Mosi-oa-tunya !

Cruel lords of all the isles,  
Though a heavenly rainbow smiles,  
Only feel bewildering annihilating terror ;  
Offer human lives to thee in blind, bewilderd error.

Love abideth still, sublime  
O'er the roar and whirl of Time,  
Foam-bow of a sunnier clime,  
Mosi-oa-tunya !

But I behold there, on high poles exposed,  
White skulls of strangers, whom the savage hordes  
Of river-pirates most inhumanly  
Slew : these barbarians the Makololo,  
Sebituane, routed and destroy'd ;  
Planting his own Bechuana speech abroad  
Among the nations ; opening thereby  
A way wherein our Sacred Oracles  
May march triumphant blessing all the land ;  
Since Moffat ardously render'd them  
Into a heretofore unletter'd tongue.

By moonlight, or by starlight, when we pause  
Upon the river's bosom, ah ! how fair !  
Shadowy fruits and flowers in elf-light hanging ;  
Plaintive low voices floating tenderly.  
One waking here, in slumber borne from far,  
Would deem he had died in sleep, and was in heaven.

Alas ! all fair dreams fade, and this would fade !  
Joy only masketh the wan face of woe.  
For not alone here fever's mortal breath  
Chills all exultant ardours of the brave ;  
Slackens bent bows of young impetuous lives,  
Baffling the swift-wing'd arrows of their aim ;  
Veils youthful eyes in languorous impotence,  
So that they love no more fair life than death.  
But there is worse than treacherous-soul'd Miasma,  
Lurking for prey, close-mask'd in orient glory,  
Enveloping a man with subtle folds  
Of dull impalpable mortality.  
Sin is a deadlier malady than all !  
These flowers are only strewn upon a corpse.  
Man has made Earth a hissing and a scorn  
Among the constellated worlds of light !  
And here the plague-spot is the loathliest.

I have come to pleasant places on my way :  
 Angels beholding might be lured from heaven !  
 And in the course of my long wandering  
 I have return'd once more to visit them.  
 Alas ! how changed !

. . . Bowery villages roll volumed clouds  
 Of fiery smoke, staining the limpid light ;  
 Rich harvests, char'd, or trampled, or un-  
 garner'd,

Idly luxuriant, meet the mournful eye.  
 While, even beside a fair golden array  
 Of bounteous corn, a few starved boys and  
 women,

Gaunt as yon skeletons around them strewn,  
 Crawl ; listless, hopeless famine in their eyes ;  
 All that were dear, slain, tortured, or expell'd  
 By arm'd assaults of the fierce slave-driver.  
 And ah ! these skeletons ! the tales they  
 tell !

Beside fair river-banks, beside wreck'd huts,  
 Under green trees, under red rocks, in caves,  
 Ghastly anatomies, in attitudes  
 Of mortal anguish, writhed, and curl'd, and  
 twisted,

Mutually clasp'd in transports of despair !

In one closed cabin, when mine eyes con-  
 form

To its faint twilight, on a rude raised bed  
 Appear two skeletons in mouldering weeds :  
 The head of one fallen from its wooden  
 pillow ;

And piteous between them a small form  
 Of a starved child, nestled by sire and mother.  
 The dead, and living wounded, and the babes,  
 Are flung by those contemptuous conquerors  
 To feed loathsome hyenas, that assemble  
 Through lurid smoke of sunset, gaunt and  
 grey ;

With obscene screaming vultures, heavily  
 Wheeling, or swooping ; rending the live prey.  
 One infant darling, weeping, wilder'd, still  
 Solicits the cold breast of a dead mother !

I have seen Lualaba's mighty rolling water  
 Red with the blood of a blithe innocent  
 people,  
 Who, unforeboding slant-eyed treachery,

Chaffer'd, and bought and sold, as was their  
 wont,

In a populous fair by the worn river-marge.  
 And there was melody of mandolin,  
 And dulcet flute ; with dancing, and warm love  
 Of gay young lovers, under broad brown eaves,  
 Sheltering from a hot ascending day :  
 Where clear young laughter blent deliciously  
 With falling notes of bowery turtle-doves,  
 Mantled in hues of tender summer cloud.  
 Harken !—a rush ! a trample of arm'd men !  
 A sudden deafening crash of musketry !  
 Hundreds of blithe love-dreaming youths  
 and maidens,

Bathed in their own life-blood, and one  
 another's,

Fall, with one last death-quivering embrace :  
 While women in rude violating arms  
 Of strangers struggle ; and the flower of men  
 Strain their necks impotent in yokes of iron,  
 Grappled around them by their insolent foes.  
 Hundreds in panic blind—man, woman,  
 child—

Plunge among waters of deep Lualaba ;  
 Whose drowning bodies the swift current  
 hurries ;

These, maim'd swollen corpses, drifting far  
 away,

Hideously-croaking famish'd alligators  
 Fight for portentous ; lashing furious trains,  
 Pulling asunder human trunks and limbs !

But follow ye the stolen journeying slave !  
 Behold her toiling shackled, starved, and  
 goaded

Upon her weary way through wild and wood,  
 Under the sunblaze ; till her bleeding feet  
 Refuse their office ; till she faints and falls !  
 Whom the tormentors, with a curse and jeer,  
 Torture to sense of cruel life once more :  
 Two burdens doth she carry ; one, her babe :  
 She cannot bear them both ; they snatch the  
 babe

From her, for all the wailing and wrung  
 hands ;

Tossing it crush'd upon a mossy stone.

They goad her on : full blinding tears have  
 darken'd

All the parch'd earth ; she cannot stumble  
far—  
Now shouts arise to kill her—it is done !  
Christ saith to Satan : “ Hold ! the child  
shall sleep ! ”

## CANTO V

Solemnly purple night reigns over me,  
With all the solemn glory of her stars.  
Sublime star-worlds, who never have dis-  
dain'd

To be my friends, consolers, counsellors,  
Guiding faint footfalls of a mortal man !  
How often, when the moon among your  
lights

Glided, with her wan face beholding day ;  
A slim canoe, carven from tender pearl,  
Confused to many crescents as I gaze ;  
Noting the very punctual moment, I  
Besought my faithful sextant to reveal  
What interval of cavernous clear gloom  
Lay now between her orb and one of you !  
I found how high above your brilliant  
Image in my small pool of mercury  
Ye rose in heaven on my meridian.  
So, in the least conjectured realm of all  
These pilgrim feet have found, my where-  
about

On this our Earth discovering I record.  
But the barbarians, when they saw me place  
And note the readings of mine instrument,  
Deemed me magician ; some beneath their  
breath,  
Viewing my quadrant's ivory curvature,  
Whisper'd : “ The Son of God hath come  
to us ;  
And lo ! the moon was underneath his arm !  
He holdeth strange communion with stars.”

Yours are fair faces of familiar friends  
To the lone traveller in a lonely land,  
Ye constellations, slowly journeying west !  
And some of you, my best beloved at home  
May not behold ; but some of you, with me,  
Their eyes and mine may gaze upon together.

Glorious worlds, unknown to mortal men,  
My spirit yearns to you from hollow orbs !  
Soon shall I slake my longing all divine  
Even in you, with higher powers than these  
Of this poor worn-out body !

Now my soul  
Seeks those immortals, who have passed away  
From earth to yonder infinite star-worlds :  
World within world, sun, planet, comet,  
moon,

All in their order and their own degree,  
One crimson, and one golden, and one green,  
Harmonious hearing a low voice of Love !  
Star of the Nile ! resplendent Sirius !

Whom here men name “ Drawer of all the  
Night ! ”

Planet of Love ! Ntanda,<sup>19</sup> fair firstborn  
Of evening, tremulous dew in a sweet rose !  
(She is so large, and clear, she sheds a  
shadow : )

Aldebaran, Orion, Fomalhaut,  
Altair, Canopus, and the Southern Cross !

Now fades yon pyramid of nebulous light  
Zodiacal, that, paling as it soars,  
Tinges mild splendour of the Milky Way  
A delicate orange ; but Magellan's clouds  
Revolve around our starless Southern Pole.  
And all is silence—only a night air  
Rustles a palm, dreaming among the stars,  
From whose dim languorous long fronds  
they rise,

Slow disentangling their celestial gleam.  
No human sound disturbs the solitude.  
Only a cry of some far florican ;  
A chirping cricket in the herb alar,  
Or doleful forest-muffled living thing.  
Also I hear a distant ghostly voice  
Of plangent surf, alternately resounding  
And ceasing, on wild Tanganyika's shore.  
But some low thunder booms at intervals.  
Some say it is a surge, wandering in caves  
Unfathomable of a mighty mountain range,  
Far off to westward, nearer Liembâ.  
And some affirm a river under earth  
Rushes in yonder mountains of Kabongo,  
Breathing a strange low thunder on the  
wind . . .

England! my children! shall I see you once  
Again before I perish?—nay the end  
Is very near: here I shall die alone:  
I am weary, worn, deserted, destitute!

It may be that my work is nearly done.  
And though some say Christ cannot conquer  
here,

A noble army of dark men to-day,  
Following His banner, proudly spurn the lie.  
The native chief Sechele,<sup>20</sup> whom I taught,  
Now teaches all his subject countrymen;  
And Africaner, the black conqueror,  
Whose very name was terror to the world  
Of his resistless ruining career,  
Moffat alone, no weapon in his hand,  
Subdued with silent spiritual power.  
The haughty devastating spirit bow'd,  
Like Saul of old, a willing thrall to Christ;  
So that all marvell'd to behold the man,  
Saying, "Can this indeed be Africaner?"  
I have unveil'd before the feeble eyes,  
Inured to twilight of a prison cell,  
Little by little, His fair radiance,  
Reflecting Him, though faintly, in my life.  
Also I made myself as one of them,  
Seeking the bent and habit of their souls,  
That I might govern, order, set to use.

And I would have wise lovers of mankind,  
Dwelling through all the land in colonies;  
Gendering new necessities of life,  
Desires entwined with all the nobler growth  
Of reason, mutual reverence, and love;  
Arousing men with sturdier enterprise  
To stir the virtues of a virgin soil;  
Fostering civil arts of mutual peace,  
That ask for interchange of services.  
So shall they cherish honourable trade  
In all the wealth of Ethiopia;  
Ebony, amber, gold, and ivory;  
A care to barter these for what is wrought  
By fiery familiars of the brain  
Yonder in Europe, in our world sublime  
Of godlike labour, triumph, and despair;  
In realms more wonderful than Africa!  
For in our Europe and America,  
Sun, ocean, earth, are vassals unto man;

For whom he moulds huge organs all inform'd  
With a blind emanation from the soul—  
Wheel within wheel of giant machinery,  
Thunderously storming, wailing, murmuring,  
Cow'd slaves of his creative human will;  
Eager to mangle the slight taskmaster,  
If God plunge him among their whirling  
limbs. . . .

But with a gauntlet of stern iron crush out,  
England! the foul snake coil'd voluminous  
About this desolate land, feeding on blood!  
Forbid, stamp out, the accursed trade in men:  
Nor dare neglect the mission of the strong,  
To bind the oppressor, and to help the poor!

Then shall these glorious immemorial rivers,  
And inland seas, mine eyes have first be-  
holden,  
The Lord's highways of holiness and peace,  
Alive with white-winged ministers of heaven,  
Waft sunnier glory to the jubilant shores  
Of Ethiopia, and the Maurian's land  
Lift up her dark deliver'd hands to God!  
I may not see it! Like Israel's leader, I  
Am but a pioneer to bring the people  
Out of their bondage: as on Pisgah's height,  
I may behold the promised land from far. . . .  
I have flung wide the portals of the night:  
Children of hope and morning, enter ye!

## CANTO VI

Now daylight rules: but Livingstone still  
sleeps  
Within the clay-built shadowy chamber walls.  
Fragments of torn soil'd paper, strewn around,  
Show notes of travel jotted on the way  
With his own red blood, used in place of ink.  
A notebook, and a Bible, lie beside;  
With sextant, and chronometer, and hides;  
Ivory, tusks, a rifle, a javelin.

Hark! the tranquillity of burning noon  
A distant shot disturbs!—and now another!  
Men rouse them—what is it? another shot!

It must be some approaching caravan.  
 Shall they awake the Master? Nay, he hears:  
 He is awake, and, listening, wonders too;  
 Hoping, and fearing; communing with God.  
 He sends his trusted servant to discover  
 Who is the leader of the caravan.  
 He has heard rumours of a white man near.  
 Who? can he be commissioned to relieve?  
 "Tis only some pale trader after all!"  
 The messenger in breathless haste returns:  
 He has seen the leader of the coming band:  
 "It is a white man! and he seeks for thee,  
 My Master! he hath large supplies with him!"  
 But Livingstone can scarce believe for joy.  
 And yet what grateful accents from afar  
 Come faintly wafted on this Afric air?  
 A hearty ringing Anglo-Saxon cheer!  
 Renew'd by multitudinous followers,  
 Advancing down the forested hill-sides  
 Of Ukaranga! swiftly they arrive:  
 Eager Ujiji pours excitedly  
 To give the strangers greeting—a black crowd,  
 Among dim huts and trees, with bearded  
 grave,  
 Flowing-robed, turban'd Arabs, in the rear  
 Of England's great explorer, waiting now  
 To welcome his unknown deliverer.  
 How? 'tis the banner of America!  
 America saves England—mighty Child  
 Of mighty Mother, it is nobly done!  
 Join your two strong right hands for ever-  
 more,  
 And swear that none shall sever them anew!  
 Then tremble, crown'd oppressors of man-  
 kind!

England, America, on your free soil  
 The slave may kneel; but only kneel to God!  
 Thou, gallant Stanley, scorning toil, alert,  
 Stern battling with thy formidable foes,  
 Hast won the brilliant prize; and Europe  
 turns  
 Her enviously grateful eyes on thee!

The outer world supposed the traveller  
 dead.  
 But Murchison, and some true friends beside,  
 In England, as beyond the sundering sea,  
 Firm in sagacious confidence, divined

His living need, and sent strong hearts to  
 help.  
 Young, namesake of a faithful friend at home,<sup>21</sup>  
 Finds all the falsehood of a traitor's tale:  
 But Stanley finds the murder'd man alive!  
 His ardent spirit bounds with generous joy,  
 Proudly exultant; for himself hath found  
 The man whom Europe and America  
 Delight to honour, and desire to save.

Who should this be with venerable mien,  
 And ashen hair, and worn wan countenance,  
 Travel-marr'd, in dun raiment, with bowed  
 form,

Wearing a mariner's goldbanded cap;  
 Of aspect firm, beneficent, and calm;  
 He who advances with a kindly smile  
 Before the Arabs?—'tis a stranger's face—  
 Yet Stanley knows it must be Livingstone!  
 Longing to clasp him in a friend's embrace,  
 And yet restraining transports honourable,  
 He only bares the deeply reverent head,  
 With questioning accent naming the great  
 name.

Livingstone warmly grasps the proffer'd hand.  
 And after salutation courteous  
 To some around, these recent yet fast friends  
 Turn toward the claybuilt tembé; whose  
 broad eaves

This afternoon shall shelter two glad men,  
 In place of one alone and desolate.  
 The traveller, slowly dying yesterday,  
 Now shares with relish in a plenteous meal,  
 Reiterating: "You have brought me life!"

Letters from loved ones, how long silent!  
 soon  
 The pilgrim reads; and while soft evening  
 wears,  
 They sit communing of how many things!  
 They speak of friends; of some whom fame  
 well knows;  
 And one whom Livingstone may chance to  
 name  
 Yet lives—another—he has pass'd away!  
 Then the explorer tells a wondrous tale  
 Of his exploits, adventures, and desires.  
 But on himself, emerged but yesterday

From forests of the dark barbarian,  
 His comrade pours a flood of radiance  
 From royal Europe trembling to her base,  
 And deluged in the lifeblood of her sons—  
 France, the Colossus, shatter'd at Sedan ;  
 Her emperor, with all her chivalry,  
 Slain, or enthrall'd ; while Germany the  
     proud  
 Draws stern inveterate coils of battle close  
 About the fairest city in the world !  
 Moltke and Bismarck are dismembering  
     France ;  
 William assumes old Barbarossa's crown  
 In that great mirror'd chamber of the halls,  
 Which Louis, Gaul's grand monarch, piled  
     in pride  
 To all the glories of his conquering race !

The wanderer listens, marvelling, to all ;  
 While darkness deepens over Africa.  
 He turns to dearer themes—tells how he  
     yearns  
 For home and his beloved ; but would fain  
 Finish his work, since all the means are here.  
 "Nor will my labour now detain me long !"  
 They pore upon their notes, and charts ;  
     arrange  
 The future, lying on a fur-strewn floor,  
 By oil-light, burning in a shard for lamp ;  
 Sipping black coffee, breathing fragrant  
     fume . . .  
 With other heart and other hopes to-night  
 Livingstone hearkens to the solemn sound  
 Of Tanganyika's melancholy wave ;  
 And his friend hearkens ; for he may not sleep,  
 Whose heart is buoyant with a wondering joy.

### CANTO VII

"Build me a hut to die in!—nevermore  
 May I behold my land, or my beloved."  
 So spake the Master ; for the end was near ;  
 Whom his dark silent followers obey.  
 For Livingstone, resuming his life-load  
 With a light heart, for all his years, and frame  
 Outworn with mighty labour and long pain,  
 Help'd even more the Mistress of his soul,

His dark and awful Mistress, Africa.  
 But that inveterate foe, the dire disease,<sup>22</sup>  
 Watching lynx-eyed for opportunity,  
 Found it, alas ! when, with a dwindling life,  
 The old, but still young-hearted traveller  
 Would flounder, as in manhood's vigorous  
     prime,  
 Through foul morasses, many hours a day.  
 The foe sprang on him ; and he felt full well  
 Its gripe this time was mortal : then the flesh  
 Quail'd and rebell'd—let him but struggle  
     home !  
 Homeward they hasten—life ebbing apace.  
 And first he rides ; but soon they carry him.  
 So when they have arrived at Muilala,  
 He bows the head—"A hut where I may  
     die !"

Now all the mists of death pass over him :  
 Terrible pain, ill dreams ; with longings vain  
 For one glimpse of a loving face afar.  
 It is the hour of mortal agony.  
 Watchman ! will the terrible night soon pass ?  
 Then through the darkness mounts a bitter  
     cry ;  
 As through more darkness upon Calvary  
 Rose a more bitter crying from the Lord.

Gloomy the night and sullen ; whose faint  
     breath  
 Moans among grasses of a lonely hut ;  
 While Bemba mourns with dying wave afar . . .  
 . . . Behold ! a dim procession slowly moves  
 Athwart the gloom ! phantasmal Hero-forms,  
 Scarr'd as with thunder ; marr'd, yet glorious ;  
 Their pale brows aureoled with martyr-flame ;  
 Lovers of men, sublime in suffering ;  
 Patriots of all races and all time ;  
 Christian confessors whom the world admires ;  
 And some, whom none regarded, saving  
     Heaven.  
 They are come to claim their brother ; and  
     the First  
 Seems like unto the lowly Son of God.

"Strew grass upon the hut ; for I am cold !"  
 And those dark silent followers obey.  
 But Majuahra kneels beside the bed ;

Dark Majuahra, a young slave set free,  
Kneels by a rude bed in a bough-built hut ;  
And while his tears fall on the wasted hand,  
That never did a fellow-creature wrong,  
But only wrought deliverance for all ;  
After the fourth day of his coming there,  
At solemn midnight, noble Livingstone.  
Saying, in a low voice, " I am going home ! " .  
Quietly sleeping, enters into rest.  
A lamp faint glimmers on the little slave,  
As on those grand wan features of the dead . . .  
. . . Daylight has dawn'd—the Conqueror  
is crown'd !

Then all consult what it were best to do.  
And his true followers, whom he has loved,  
And taught, and saved from bondage worse  
than death,  
Who have shared his perils and long wander-  
ings ;  
Chumah, Hamoyda, Susi, and the rest ;  
Resolve to bear away the dear remains,  
Even to the coast—a thousand miles away !  
That so the English may receive their Chief,  
And bring him home—where he desired to be.  
But fearing lest the village interpose,  
They hide the truth of their commander's  
death ;  
And, building a high fence around a booth,  
Bury the body's inner parts beneath  
A shadowy tree, with solemn funeral rites ;  
Carving thereover name and date of death.  
All that remains they reverently prepare  
During twelve mournful days beneath the sun,  
Embalming it with salt that purifies.  
Last in rude bark of a great tree they bear him  
Toward the isle of clove and cinnamon,<sup>23</sup>  
Bulbul and orange, and pomegranate flower ;  
Carrying their dead Leader to the sea,  
Who in glad triumph should have brought  
them there !

#### THE CARAVAN

A solemn, strange, a holy Caravan !  
When was the like thereof beheld by man ?  
Slow journeying from un conjectured lands,  
Behold ! they bear him in their gentle hands ;

His dark youths bear him in the rude grey  
bark,  
As though their burden were a holiest ark.  
Embalm'd they bear him from the lands of  
Nile,  
As men bore Israel, Abraham, crewhile.  
Weary and weak, and faint and fallen ill,  
Through desert, jungle, forest wild and still,  
By lake, and dismal swamp, and rolling river,  
Slowly their dark procession winds for ever.  
How would the Chief exult at every sight !  
Alas ! those eagle eyes are seal'd in night.  
Behold them winding over hill and plain,  
In storm, in sunshine, calm and hurricane !  
And if they may not hide what thing they  
bear,  
Men banish them with horror and wild fear,  
Far from all human dwelling ; nor will feed ;  
Nor furnish aught to fill their bitter need ;  
Assailing them with hindering word and deed.  
But though their burden may not wake to  
cheer,  
The Hero-Spirit hovers very near :  
Upon them rests the holy Master's power :  
His soul before them moves, a mighty tower !  
They, and the body, rest beneath the stars,  
Or moonèd ghostly-rainbow'd cloudy bars ;  
Until at length they hear the sounding sea,  
In all the grandeur of Eternity !  
A solemn, strange, a holy Caravan !  
When was the like thereof beheld by man ?

Now waft him homeward in the gallant  
ship,  
Expanding her white wings for a long flight !  
It is not far from when we look'd for him.  
In Maytime we had hoped to greet the sail,  
Wafting our stainless conqueror to rest  
In his own land, irradiate with love,  
Wearing our well-earn'd honour on his brow.  
Then bells would have peal'd over him, and  
flowers  
Strewn his triumphant path, and shouts of joy  
Have rent the summer air to welcome him.  
So we have welcomed our victorious  
Warriors yesterday from Africa—  
And so alas ! have mourn'd the noble band  
Who, call'd by honour, gloriously died.

A sail is sighted—he is coming home.  
But all fair colours of the many nations  
In harbour, flying low from many a mast,  
And minute guns, and muffled voice of bells,  
With reverent silence of assembling throngs,  
And mourning emblems in the public ways,  
Mournfully tell of how the hero comes!

Now yet a little further carry him.  
Westminster opens wide her ancient doors  
For more illustrious dust to enter in.  
Honour the noble Scottish weaver-boy,  
The lowly-born illustrious Livingstone!  
With solemn music we will leave him here,  
Among the ashes of our mighty fallen.  
Behold! world-honour'd Shades that haunt  
the fane,

Statesman, or monarch, poet, soldier, sage—  
The while he moves along their awful line  
To his own hallow'd English sepulchre;  
From yon far forest of lone Muilala  
Moves to more glorious glooms of West-  
minster—

Bend in a grand reverent humility  
Before our stainless warrior of the cross;  
Uncursed of any humblest human soul;  
Blest and for ever to be blest by man;  
Foremost of all explorers; Liberator  
Of the dark continent, and all her sons!

Africa, and America, appear  
His mighty mourners; for a staunchest friend,  
Stanley is here; and here the slave set free,<sup>24</sup>  
Who brought his noble master to the coast;  
The Negro youth, who breathed our English  
words

Of faithful hope, words we are breathing now,  
Over that heart entomb'd in Africa.  
For though she hath restored some dust to us,  
In life, in death, she claims to hold his heart!  
. . . Hath he not died in her own awful  
arms?

His sons and daughters in deep sable robed  
Bear large white wreaths of blossom for his  
grave:

Yea, dark Death lies all buried and conceal'd  
Under sweet emblems of immortal life!  
Alas! if he had come to us alive,

He might have gather'd violets to-day;  
Listening to our earliest nightingale  
Under the woodland sprays of soft young  
green;

But we have strewn spring flowers upon the  
bier

And we have wrought in white azaleas  
A cross thereover; while our kindly Queen  
Has twined her delicate wreath for him; and  
some

Lay fadeless amaranth, with roses rare,  
And his own cherish'd palms of Africa,  
Palms of the conqueror, upon his breast.  
Now while those ashes slowly sink to rest,  
All Europe, and his Country bending over;  
While solemn music soars with seraph plume;  
Pearly soft sun-rays, like sweet wings of  
doves,

Enter yon high clerestories, and abide  
Athwart grey marrying fans of the dim ceiling:  
So all we mourners, piers, and monuments,  
Glow with a rainbow glory, as from Heaven.

Is it not better as the Lord hath will'd?  
On his own chosen battle-field he falls,  
Still pressing forward, face toward the foe!  
A martyr's death and tomb illume with light  
His plain severe sublimity of life.  
Could he have borne, who drank the liberal  
wind

Of deserts, like a lion or a pard,  
Our stifling air of dull proprieties,  
And pale decorum's mild monotony?  
Who, with clear eyes on the Celestial Pole,  
Loved, like an Arab, wandering wild and free!

While some surmise the dubious dim realm,<sup>25</sup>  
Where he surrender'd to a sacred cause  
His very life-breath in a life-long war,  
Holds verily the furthest founts of Nile!

His death-cold hand unveils a Mystery,  
Which all the unyielding ages from of old  
Have shrouded in impenetrable gloom;  
A darkness formidable from tongues confused  
Of hydra-headed Error, breathing fear.  
Champion of knowledge, and celestial love!  
Conqueror of unconquerable Nile!

Mortal too bold ! who dared to penetrate  
 That awful phantom-guarded Presence-  
 chamber,  
 Where never mortal came !—there blinded  
 fell,  
 All unaware of his own victory !

For here, between these very parallels,  
 Ancient Purânas of the Indian  
 Place Soma Giri ; whence a vast long lake  
 Amâra flows, Amâra “ of the Gods,”  
 And from Amâra, Nile.

Alas ! he died  
 Unknowing all the hopeful fruit that Frere<sup>26</sup>  
 Ripened from those indignant words of  
 truth,  
 A lone old man, among Hell’s legionaries,  
 Unquailing hurl’d against the slave-trader.  
 He learn’d stern Baker’s wonderful cam-  
 paign :  
 Now, peradventure, he hath learn’d the  
 whole !

But if Columbus, voyaging forlorn,  
 Wandering ever in wan ways unknown  
 Of shoreless ocean toward the dying day,  
 Daring, presumptuous mortal ! to assail  
 Barriers Heaven piles against mankind :  
 If that Columbus, fronting desperate crews  
 Of mutinous men, with tranquil eyes un-  
 moved

From all their high and visionary aim ;  
 Landing at last upon another world,  
 Conquer’d from chaos in the power of faith,  
 A blooming world, that seem’d the Paradise  
 Of our first parents in their innocence,  
 And proudly named Columbia to-day—  
 If he, the navigator, lives for ever  
 In all men’s green and grateful memory ;  
 With Raleigh, Gama, Bruce, and Magel-  
 haens—

Then surely shall our English Livingstone,  
 Honouring this our own tumultuous time ;  
 Heroic with immortal heroism,  
 That burns for ever in humanity ;  
 Rouse all the race unto a loftier life !



THE HOUSE OF RAVENSBURG<sup>1</sup>

1877

<sup>1</sup> See note F.

τὸ δυσσεβὲς γὰρ ἔργον  
μετὰ μὲν πλείονα τίκτει,  
σφετέρῃ δ' εἰκότα γέννα.

ÆSCHYLUS, *Agam.*

μῖμνει δὲ μίμνοντος ἐν χρόνῳ Διὸς  
παθεῖν τον ἔρξαντα· θέσμιον γὰρ·  
τίς ἂν γονὰν ἀραῖον ἐκβάλῃ δόμων;  
κεκόλληται γένος πρὸς ἅτα.

*Ibid.*

## PREFATORY NOTE

I HAVE taken some liberties with the history of that part of Switzerland in which the scene of my tragedy is principally laid; but I believe I am justified in regarding this as excusable in the case of a drama not primarily historical. The liberties I have taken, moreover, are not of great importance. I have suppressed the historical Bishop of Coire, and blended the revolt against the Abbot of St. Gall with the revolt against him. As regards the Peasants' War, Rudolph of Werdenberg did indeed play the part I have assigned to Ralph; but I must confess that Æschylus and rhododendrons were probably not known at that particular moment and place. The incident of the Sub-Prior's visit of remonstrance to Sigismund was suggested, partly by a similar one in the life of Beckford, the author of "Vathek," which was related to me when I was a boy by some of the people near Beckford's place, Fonthill Abbey, and partly by the doings at Medmenham Abbey, in the last century. The revellers of that time were infidel, as well as reckless livers; but their creed was the materialism of their epoch. The ideas and sentiments of my Knight are similarly impious; tinged, however, rather with that peculiar colour which so often characterised the speculative and practical impiety of the Middle Ages. I need only allude to the tenets of certain Gnostics, Sufis, and Beguins; as also to the

lives and opinions of Vanini, Cardan, Bruno, or "Ezzelin the Monk." Sigismund is a philosophical Tannhäuser (such men as Beckford, Byron, and De Musset are not unlike him, perhaps, in character), who suffers retribution, and the arrogant impiety of whose philosophy suffers rebuke, in accordance with the law, known alike to Hebrew, Greek, and recent science, that "*the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children.*" I have thought it in accordance, however, with modern taste to leave somewhat undefined the *specific nature* of the crimes committed by members of the guilty race, such specific explanation not being essential to the development of my plot.

Moreover, what our own experience and our own science teach us about life in this respect may wear an appearance slightly different from that which the same law wore of old. What we now perceive is the fact of half evil, half insane tendencies—unrestrained, or unsuccessfully resisted—transmitted from generation to generation, and bearing their bitter fruit of multiform sin, sorrow, pain; yet not without hope of salvation and Divine deliverance.

Of the three "unities," I have only sought to observe that of action; but although a unity of motive pervades the whole composition, it may in some sense also be regarded as a *trilogy*.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

COUNT SIGISMUND.

RALPH (his son).

ADRIAN (son of Lady Blanche).

SIR WALTER DAVENANT (guardian of Constance, and subsequently of Ralph).

CHIALDERER (a leader in the popular revolt).

HANS (a hunter).

RUDOLPH (a young boy, son of one of Sigismund's tenants).

The President of the Court of Justice of the newly-formed Republican League.

An Austrian Commander.

An old Swiss Serf.

PETER (another peasant).

CONSTANCE (wife of Sigismund).

BERTHA (betrothed to Ralph).

BLANCHE (wife of Baron Wenceslas).

*Servants—A Warder—Soldiers—Assessors of the Court—A Swiss  
Multitude, &c.*

*Time—EARLY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.*

*Place—PARTLY IN ENGLAND; PARTLY IN SWITZERLAND.*

# THE HOUSE OF RAVENSBURG

## A DRAMA

### PART I.—SIGISMUND

#### ACT I

SCENE I.—*Fruits, and a simple Meal in a Summer-house in a Garden of an old English Manor-house.*

CONSTANCE and SIGISMUND sitting there.

*Constance.* Why have you seemed so gloomy, love, of late?

As though some fearful secret weighed upon you!

*Sigismund.* Secret! what secret, Constance?

*Cons.* Don't look so strange! I only said "as if."

You are ever brooding over some profound Conundrums, a mere foolishness to me!

And so you go about like a scared ghost.

*Sig.* Darling, beside these riddles, well you know,

For I have told you, grave concerns of state Imperatively summon; so I must

Soon leave thee: welfare of my populous lands

In yonder barony demands me too.

*Cons.* How shall I bear it? Sigismund, since she,

My mother, died, you are all my life—

You, and the children,—'twas for very long

You left me when we parted last,—and I,

I had deemed it would be only for awhile.

When shall I visit your own glorious land

Of snowy mountain, azure lake, and river?

Soon let us go there with our little Ralph!

*Sig.* We will,—but he is young; the land is rude:

You know I said I could not take you yet!

*Cons.* Ah! what a dreadful tale my maiden told

This morning when she robbed me: can it be That men and women are so evil, love, As 'tis averred some are? for though I hear, I scarcely may conceive such wickedness. They seem like people of another blood.

My dear old nurse never let any tell Such stories to me—

*Sig.* I have heard that story: only, Constance mine,

You, from young innocence, imagine men And women angels! when you mingle with them,

You will be more tolerant of our foibles, love. Such failings always were—will always be, Nor are they so terrific as you deem.

Nay, as I strove to prove to you of yore, All the luxuriant growth of human story, The very sap and substance of our lives, Draw nutriment from bitter Wrong and Error, No less than from sweet Virtue and the Truth. These are alternate pillars of our world, Here dusk, blood red, here alabaster pure, Supporting the fair commonweal of man. And look you! all may not be anchorites.

If I revealed to you my proper life, You might abhor me! even now I claim Some freedom by your leave, my little saint! I have told you something: have I not? already—

Only I love you: is not love enough?

*Cons.* You frighten me; I know you never were

Evil as you pretend ! I know that now  
 You would not wound me willingly : the folk  
 Margaret prattled of, they never loved ;  
 Or parents tied unholy bonds, or they,  
 With hearts unwed, forswore themselves to  
 God.

Your errors must be venial ; and you  
 Were surely tried beyond all others, dear.

*Sig.* Nay but, my Constance, you are a  
 mere child !

You should have wed some angel, not a man !

*Cons.* Ah ! why so bitter ? be not harsh.  
 or cold !

Yet am I jealous ; strive to guard yourself,  
 Body and spirit, for your little one,  
 Who would not aught should ever come  
 between us,

Nor aught confuse her vision of the Lord !

I do mistrust your fine philosophy.

Some of the things you say are beautiful ;  
 But some confound me ; seem most dangerous.  
 Often I know not what I should believe ;  
 And this makes me unhappy, when you speak  
 Of how both Catholic, and our reformed  
 Pastors are foolish, and of how the truth  
 Hides in some dark unfathomable deep,  
 That makes me dizzy, gazing from the brink !  
 Or when you talk of common right or wrong  
 Varying like your queer chameleon ;  
 Of what is evil, yet allowable

To some peculiar natures—all my brain  
 Reels, and I know not where I am ; you  
 would

Not lead me from the truth, for you are good  
 And true,—only I cannot follow,—thus  
 My head turned when I tried to climb the  
 rock,

Where you, a springbok, mounted easily !  
 Ah ! right is surely right, and wrong is wrong.  
 We must be led by our good hearts, I think,  
 Kept pure by Him who always answers  
 prayer.

*Sig.* Well, fairy, we will speak no more  
 of it.

Breathed ever fairy with a soul to think ?

*Cons.* But I must go and watch the little  
 one—

Shadows are lengthening.

*Sig.* Our little one ! our perfect little one !  
 As I sat in mine oriel to-day,  
 They wheeled him round and round our  
 pleasant garden,

Under slim aspens, whispering jasper-hued  
 Athwart opal horizons, and pearl sky.  
 Then all my weird wild thought's dim laby-  
 rinth,

With hideous monsters that inhabit there,  
 Even as demons at the holy sign,  
 Vanished before the treble of a child,  
 Vanished ; and left a sky serene as his,  
 Serene as light his singing rippled through.

*Cons.* Prattling so blithely, like a little  
 bird ;

Of what ! the Lord and his pure angels know :  
 Surely they listen to him with deep joy !

*Sig.* Ah ! when he breaks upon my reverie,  
 While I am musing, care-oppressed, alone,  
 He gleams, a burst of sunshine on the gloom  
 Of some dark forest, or athwart grey clouds,  
 Running toward me, all one melody,  
 As an unhopèd-for rill, in a hot land,  
 Starts up and sings to a thirsty wayfarer !

*Cons.* You say you are evil ! yet you love  
 the child !

Come up this evening, Sigismund, and see  
 him !

[*Exit.*

## SCENE II.—*The Child's Sleeping-room.*

CONSTANCE *singing to the child in his cot,  
 who, half asleep, also sings at intervals.*  
*The door ajar. SIGISMUND listening  
 and looking from outside.*

*Cons.* (*sings*). Pause awhile, my lovely child,  
 Ere thou fly away from me !  
 The world is traitorous and wild,  
 No warm wing to shelter thee.  
 Pause awhile !

Weave white flowers in a chain ;  
 Babble fables of a fairy ;  
 Infant moments feel no stain,  
 Woven to a garland airy ;  
 Weave white flowers !

Linger here in a dewy dale;  
 Climb not under a hot noon;  
 Cull pure lilies of the vale;  
 Darling, do not leave me soon!  
 Linger here!

*Sig.* She singeth him to sleep; and with  
 one foot

In dreamland, he too followeth her singing,  
 Floating his wavering bright waifs of song,  
 To follow in the wake of her full sail:  
 So water flames through twilight of stirred  
 leaves,

At intervals; or mellow melody  
 Of bees awakens in sweet summer time,  
 Between their dives in dimlit flower-bells.  
 So, a child may follow one along a path,  
 Now in the open, now in corn-poppies,  
 Immersed in watery greenness of slim corn.  
 Lo! he hath seen her shadow on the wall,  
 Large-looming in a warm glow of faint fire,  
 Fluctuant o'er the ceiling: in his mind  
 It mingles with some favourite tales of fay,  
 And wondrous giant; until, half afraid,  
 Once more he passes wholly from the realm  
 Of misty slumber into waking-world.  
 Rising on cherub arm, he peers around  
 For mother, with half-timid face, bewildered.  
 "Darling, lie down! 'tis only mother's  
 shadow!"

Dimly he comprehends her; and obeying,  
 Smilingly sinketh into rest again.  
 Behold! the pillow sloped about his curls,  
 In dark soft dells; his flower-features turn,  
 Ever as a sunflower towards the sun,  
 To Constance—there the ghost is out of sight!

[SIGISMUND *advances*.

Shall I not take him, dear, to see the moon  
 Through yonder oriel? 'Tis beautiful,  
 And will delight the child—he doth not sleep!

*Cons.* Then wrap him very warmly: there  
 is frost.

*Sig.* So! come and see the moon with  
 father, Ralph.

[*They take him to the oriel.*

Look! how the lattice chequers the soft face  
 With tender shadow; and where he breathes,  
 the moon

Veils her in dewy silver of the pane,  
 While Ralph's brown dewy orbs are glisten-  
 ing,  
 Like yonder nightingale's upon the spray  
 Of blossom: hearken! how sweetly he over-  
 floweth!

Is not the young moon pretty, baby boy?

*Ralph.* Does Jesus live in pretty moon,  
 mamma?

*Cons.* Darling, I know not; yet perchance  
 He may!

[*To SIGISMUND.*] Now carry him back, for  
 he must really sleep! [*Exeunt.*

### SCENE III.—*The Library.*

*Sig. (sol.).* How sweet it were to dwell for  
 ever so,

With these alone, afar from the false world!  
 And yet I shall grow weary; and my fate  
 Calls me to yonder regions, where I may  
 Not take her, and the child: yet ah! if only  
 The hallowing of their influence abode  
 With me for ever! but afar from her  
 Beneficent orb, straightway, alas! I fall  
 Under some tyranny of a baleful star.  
 How often shall I struggle, and resolve  
 With mortal throes of agony to loose  
 The serpent rings of sin that stifle me!  
 How often shall I feel the tightening,  
 When, like a fool, I half believed me free!  
 Ah! fascination of malignant eyes,  
 And hot rank breath, that with insane delight  
 Maddens me, though I loathe it! Ah! the  
 cold

Slime of a cruel coil inexorable,  
 Poisoning with obscenest memories,  
 Or deadly dread of dark impending doom,  
 My purest, all my holiest happiness!  
 Enveloping in a Nessus-robe of flame,  
 And blotting, blurring, all the innocent air  
 With smoke, as from the bottomless pit of  
 hell!

Surely that Blanche is mine own evil soul,  
 Incarnate in a woman, yet abiding  
 No less with mine own self—how very fair!  
 My God! I cannot bear to dream how fair!

I know I may not burst away from her—  
And yet I love her not!

The child! the child!  
God, if there be God, only save the child  
From this infernal caldron of live death,  
That, as in some grim sea-cave, buffeteth  
From rock to rock, bellowing like a beast  
Famished! . . .

He shall be tended here in haven,  
Far from all evil by mine angel mild,  
His mother; here where never storms arise;  
Only sweet suns shine, or some tranquil stars,  
Mirrored in tranquil myrtle-bosomed water!  
And after—yea! what after? He is pure;  
As heaven's beam, he is unsulliable! . . .  
I know in sooth, relentless Ate dogs  
With sullen hate mine house, which is  
accurs'd. . . .

But may she not be baffled? If I fall,  
Tangled in more than Clytemnestra's toils,  
May not my child be the deliverer,  
Who shall arrest the spiritual plague?  
Standing between the living and the dead,  
Atoner, swinging a fair golden censer,  
Rich with his own life's perfume, over all? . . .  
Ah! must the incense of that life be  
burned? . . .

What if mine evil deeds descend on him,  
A rain of gory curses? God, avert it!  
The Universal Heart is not so black  
And bloody as to work that wickedness!  
Nay, never prayer moves hollow-hearted  
Destiny, more than breathing moves a crag.  
Future and past, one solid adamant,  
No longing and no litany may sunder!  
We are the battlefield of heaven and hell;  
The pawns of light and darkness; who  
knoweth  
Which shall be victor in the end?—But I  
Am summoned, summoned into Venusberg!

## ACT II

SCENE I.—*The Castle of Ravensburg, in  
Rheinthal, among the Alps.* SIGIS-  
MUND'S private chamber, with parch-  
ments, some of the paraphernalia of

*alchemy and astrology, also a harp.  
The tapestry on the walls represents the  
Triumph of Bacchus, Ganymede and  
the Eagle, Jupiter and Io, &c.*

COUNT SIGISMUND, *to whom enter a*  
Servant.

*Servant.* My lord, there craves immediate  
audience  
The prior, or sub-prior, of St. Gall.  
*Sig.* A priest! Grammercy! Have you  
not your orders  
To admit no strangers? Did you tell him so?  
*Ser.* I did; but he was most importunate.  
*Sig.* What means this insolence? Admit  
the monk.

*Enter the SUB-PRIOR of St. Gall.*

Sir, I receive no guests. What is your  
pleasure?

*Sub-Prior.* My lord, I feel the weight upon  
my soul  
Of duty unfulfilled: I know that you . . .

[*Hesitates.*]

*Sig.* Nay, sir, fear nothing! freely speak  
your mind.

*Sub-Prior.* I knew that you lived inac-  
cessible  
To all the world; and heard what rumour  
told,

With bated breath, of threats against who  
dared

Intrude upon your savage solitude.  
But I, grown old and feeble, and afraid  
By nature, am the herald of a Lord  
Mightier than any mighty lord of earth.  
You He arraigns by his ambassador,  
Vassal unfaithful!

*Sig.* Nay, reserve your breath!  
I smile at all preposterous pretension  
Of Church and priest. What! though you  
stoop to heed

The idle foam of common lying rumour,  
That chafes and spends itself around my walls,  
You have not seized the solitary waif  
Of truth washed shoreward in the noisy tide!  
That I am a sworn enemy of fraud,

And superstition, and a priestly caste.  
Reserve your pious shafts for those who feel  
them!

I am panoplied in reason, and your curse,  
Baffled, rebounds to wound you.

*Sub-Prior.* Yea, I know  
Of your impiety; but do not deem  
The tower of truth may vanish at a scoff.  
It frowns impregnable!  
If but a tithe of what men tell be true,  
Your life dishonours an illustrious name;  
Ancestral knights, who wrought in ancient  
time

Valiant deeds for Christ and fatherland!  
You have alienated all the noble peers,  
Who scowl displeasure on your shame; they  
pass

With face averted from a loathsome lair.

*Sig.* Nay, sir, it is my pleasure to refuse  
Admittance unto any of their crew;  
Dull, pious tyrants of the trodden serf,  
Or mindless rangers of the woods for prey.  
I am the people's friend: inquire of them  
Who till these lands or trellis-wandering vine  
If I am their oppressor! You and yours  
Have robbed the widow and the fatherless:  
And that is why your venomous calumny  
Assails my fame! You hate me; for I pluck  
Your victims from among the hoofs of scorn,  
Unlock their fetters, shatter their dungeon-  
doors,

Pour the fair light of freedom on your lies!

*Sub-Prior.* The people's flatterer, not  
friend! who rob  
Them of more living treasure than mere  
gold—

Of hope, salvation, heaven, very God.  
God's enemy! blasphemer of the Church!  
Profaner of all holiest mysteries!  
This, the most heinous of your crimes, and  
least,

That you have boldly violated virtue,  
Scoffing at all her seemly decencies—  
Yea, strewn her modest members on the wind.  
But worse! what of these mummeries profane?  
I dare not name them: scarcely I believe.  
Yet 'tis averred, that you and your lewd  
lemans,

Or other fiends, arrayed in chasuble,  
In alb, and stole of holy men, with reft  
Vessels from desecrated shrines o'erthrown,  
With antics vile, ineffable, obscene,  
Dare parody our most solemn ritual,  
Feigning you "Prior" of the "Hellfire"  
crew!

That so you are seeking to revive the cult  
Of demons, whom poor damned souls long  
ago

Worshipped! A very witch's sabbath yours.  
My lord, my lord! humble yourself in dust!  
Renounce your crime! Bow low before the

Pope,  
God's own high Vicar, ere it be too late!

*Sig.* The Pope! what Pope? Dost know  
that there are three?

You cloister-folk are very sound asleep.  
I doubt if the last trump would waken you.  
Thou wasteth breath; nay, prove thy precious  
charges!

*Sub-Prior.* Sir Count; in some dim tor-  
tuous gallery

That looks on a quadrangle of your castle,  
Where the stone fountain plays, no less than  
two

Strange, evil creatures ran against me: one,  
A fair and wanton youth with bare white  
breast,

Gorgeously garmented; the other, a yellow,  
Outworn, lank, prematurely old, ill-faced  
Being in garb of knight—both, both, were  
drunken!

*Sig. (with a grim laugh).* Well! did they  
hurt you, father? One's my page;  
The other, Baron Wenceslas, my guest.

*Sub-Prior.* 'Tis shrewdly guessed the page  
is a fair lady!

Your barony, that should have been a blessing,  
Stinks—very plague-spot of the common air!

*Sig.* I know not wherefore I have suffered  
you

To prate thus far; but if you prize your life,  
Your freedom, grey-beard wanton, prate no  
more!

Sir Monk, methinks you have wellnigh for-  
gotten

In whose unchallengeable power you stand.

*Sub-Prior.* God challenges your power,  
my lord, by me.  
I shall not shrink from harsh and wholesome  
speech! [*A pause.*]  
*Sig.* So you deem vice the least of my  
offences?  
*Sub-Prior.* Surely! to flout the proffered  
terms of God,  
Made known to men by heralds of his grace,  
Through whom alone He deigns to treat  
with us,  
Worms who rebelled against Him, and yet  
live!  
Scorn the Divine Son! scorn the Virgin  
Mother!  
Whose holy hearts were wrung to set you  
free!  
God's altars and their sacrifice renewed  
Ever for your deliverance from hell!  
Albeit our fair verities outshine  
The sun itself, and sin alone be blind!  
By painful penance, by profound remorse,  
By some poor compensation made to Christ,  
In lowly guise of his ambassadors,  
One may have hope of absolution  
From heinous evil living; but if he  
Blaspheme the very source of Grace Divine,  
Turn from the one sole Water sent to quench  
Fires of a wrath eternal—what remains?  
It is more sin  
To insult the jealous Majesty on high  
Than wantonly to injure all the world! . . .  
Yourself, my lord, are under interdict.  
What fate more dreadful can o'erwhelm you?  
Yet  
Beware of what you deem more terrible.  
Our sovereign is champion of the faith;  
And all the peers would hail your overthrow.  
*Sig.* What! dare you threaten? Nay,  
the people here—  
*Sub-Prior.* I only warn you! venture not  
to urge  
Von stiffnecked heretic herdsmen, near your  
fief,  
To rob us of our tithes and pastureland.  
Bid them restore the spoil; do penance; and  
Beware lest Heaven unleash the hounds of  
hell!

Still He restrains them! hanging by a hair,  
Behold! the sword of everlasting doom!  
*Sig.* Ah! *there's* the sum and substance of  
my sin!  
That I presume to question and denounce  
God manifest in—a priest's voracity!  
Yea! I have taught the peasants to resist  
His usurpation of their ancient rights,  
His feasting on their crushed humanities!  
And I defy you, with your secular  
Confederates in tyranny! For these  
Impious monstrosities you charge me with,  
Prove them! mere babble of a priest proves  
nought.  
The holiest, if they vary from worn ways,  
Well-trodden of a dominant multitude,  
Must hear malignant accusations hurled  
Of muffled orgies, under mask of worship.  
Yet frankly I avow my heresy.  
Now hear my creed, and curse me, and  
begone!  
There is no infinite Iniquity,  
Ringed round with multitudinous ministers,  
Aflame for slaughter of weak innocent  
Victims to vain insatiate cruelty,  
Crowned Emperor of all the Universe!  
Men will not be tormented evermore,  
Because their father's heart once vibrated  
With an Æolian music of desire,  
When airs in unison awoke the chords.  
No fiend hath formed, and dangled a bright  
joy  
Before the eyes He framed to relish joy,  
Then mocking banned the bauble; nor will  
sear  
With slakeless hatred eyes He made for love,  
Only because they are what He hath made.  
Whoever dies in very deed is dead.  
Let us enjoy the moment ere it flies!  
You churchmen, father, you yourselves enjoy,  
Unless men libel most outrageously!  
But, with all common court appurtenances,  
Heaven hath its licensed jester, I suppose:  
And none may laugh but the official fool.  
Heaven can be bribed, moreover, with shed  
blood,  
And agonies, and sensuous offering  
(Though men have senses and itself have none)

Of wrought gold, incense fume, and wreathen  
gem,

Or by the personal flattery of bent knees,  
To annul for favourites the dread espousal,  
Ancient as time, of evil deeds and death!

What man may fathom awful Nemesis?

And yet *she* is no bawd for one to buy;

Rather the only Incorruptible! . . .

Nemesis! Nay, who is she? In her name  
Were those poor innocents slaughtered here  
last yule,

That met for mirth in yonder upper chamber?  
Long cherished day-dream—in wee cots by  
night

Soft slumber's rapture—is your festival  
Of the Divine Child to our little ones!

The flooring trembled—sunken with the  
freight

Of innocent human lives—yawned, buried all  
In hideous heaps of mortal agony!

Were these our blackest sinners and their  
seed?

Nay, sir, the blackest of them staid at home.  
All is confusion: whatsoever is  
Seems right or wrong, according as we stand.  
Eat and drink then! to-morrow we shall die.

*Sub-Prior.* And yet you blame our  
“tyranny,” our “fraud!”

Another's wrong is wrong because another's:  
But your dear wrong is right, for it is yours!  
O “worldly wisdom!” Let me be a fool!

*Sig.* Well, all's confusion; now you have  
struck home.

“I only know this—that I nothing know.”

*Sub-Prior.* Apart from revelation and the  
Church.

And yet you pile some fabric of a creed  
Upon mere void of private fantasy!

*Sig.* All is illusion: for we love a maiden,  
Or friend; we swear no power shall pluck  
away

The draught of love from our blest lips for  
ever.

But while we swear, exulting, lo! Love's  
glory

Fades, palls upon us, like mere satiate

Ambition! One who sneers, the while we  
sleep,

Insinuates poison in the bowl; behold!

We yield our nectar, changed to common  
wine,

With never a murmur! some more potent  
Will

Compels us to call bitter sweet, sweet bitter;

To swallow our own swelling words; to crow,

Or whimper, as it pleases, and yet dream

We are free—no puppets! until, in the end,

We cry for warmth and food alone; then life,  
That seemed fair substance, in our clasp  
dissolves,

Like ice in a babe's hand, to nothing; and  
We follow our own lovely hopes; we vanish!

*Sub-Prior.* Too true, my lord! men's  
treasure is above,

Or nowhere in the world. Oh, would that  
yours

Were garnered yonder!

*Sig.* You gaze upon my pool mercurial,

Alembic, flask, and symbols of a lore

You love not; there be creatures hovering

Around, strange intimates, unseen by you;

Yea, spirits mild or awful, night and day,

Meet me on mount and mead familiarly.

Yonder abide the ever-tranquil gods,

Robed in a luminous immortality,

Dispensing doom to mortals, weal or woe.

Sun, stars, and moon, with you do I consort!

Who in serene heights of philosophy

Contemplates truth abides above the vain

Human divisions of mere good and ill,

That common mortals hold for absolute.

One with essential Nature, in calm scorn

He allows all winds of anger and desire

To sway the poor flesh-phantom, as they list!

Yea, in life's lower sphere he worshippeth

Fair foam-born Aphrodite, and her son!

There are two poles of dark Necessity,

Named Good and Evil. All the prosperous  
times,

Or grievous; all heroic and base lives,

Emerge from Fate's unfathomable cave,

Each in his order: here a family,

Or nation, floweth in full light of day;

Here crawlth in a sanguinary gloom.

Is there no curse upon mine ancient house?

Sir, I could tell you tales of what hath been—

Nay, what imports it? I am as were they,  
The sires, whose fell career I might unfold—  
And I arraign them not; for who of us  
Breathes self-engendered?

*Sub-Prior.* Nay, unhappy man,  
Pause and consider! If you had a son,  
Supremely loved—

*Sig.* How, father, I a son?  
Who said I had a son—and what of him?

*Sub-Prior.* Suppose that it were so; then,  
I inquire,

In your own soul would no remorseful guilt  
Burn as your own guilt—yours and not  
another's—

If his fair life should founder in the storm?  
He, rebel offspring of a rebel sire,  
Ruined, rejected by the All-Father?

*Sig.* Nay, God forbid! Why torture me,  
Sir Priest,

With a mere feigning?

*Sub-Prior.* I but bring it all  
Home to thine heart, to show thee 'tis a  
cobweb,

A snare of Satan, thy philosophy!

Yea, blasphemy, thou contumelious lord,  
We may give answer to with sword and fire!  
Deem'st thou the Church so old and impotent,  
Since Frederick, and the leaven of Mahomet,  
Since your new-fangled learning, and ill  
dreams

Of cursed Paynims, risen from deep hell  
To be God's scourges, to confound the world?  
Not Huss, not Waldo, not Averroes,  
Hath ever spoken viler atheism.

*Sig.* Averroes! Hast thou read Averroes?

*Sub-Prior.* Read him! read Satan! Holy  
Mary! no!

Finding some yellow heathen scroll preserved  
Among our abbey muniments last year,  
I wrote illuminated litanies  
Therein—the wicked words are all rubbed  
out!—

But I will send our learned brother Paul  
To argue, and confute thee, and convince—

*Sig.* Nay, by the rood, one holy man's  
enough!

I shall know how to guard myself. Adieu!  
For I must pray thee, father, to begone,

Since there are some here not so mild as I;  
And if they found thee, where no monk  
before—

*Sub-Prior.* I have done my master's bidding,  
and depart.

[*Exit abruptly, without salutation.*]

*Sig. (sol.).* A murrain on their ignorant  
insolence!

[*After a pause, during which SIGISMUND paces the chamber in the utmost agitation.*]

What ho! my horse! the horse was to be  
saddled.

*Enter Servant.*

Is it ready?

*Ser.* No, my lord.

*Sig.* Yet I gave orders  
Before the priest came. Instantly! dispatch!  
Where shall I find a man who will obey me?  
Sirrah, you quit my service from this hour!  
[*Exit Servant.*]

*Servant re-enters very speedily.*

*Ser.* My lord, I crave your pardon; but  
the steed  
Has long been waiting your good pleasure.

*Sig.* Well:  
Fool not to know! My sword!  
Now fasten it! [*Exit.*]

[*He hurries rapidly to the postern.*]

SCENE II.—*Before the Postern of the Castle:  
a Horse caparisoned.*

*Sig.* Where went the fat priest? He shall  
pay for this,—

Yea, with his life! Who saw him?

*A Man-at-Arms.* I see him yet,  
So please your lordship, ambling down the  
path—

By yonder ilex.

[*SIGISMUND mounts; but in blind fury  
he reels in his saddle, and would fall,  
but that the soldier supports him.*]

*Enter* LADY BLANCHE.

*Blanche.* Where are you going, Count?

[*At the sight of her* SIGISMUND *restrains himself and pauses.*

So you have been receiving holy men!

Would that the priest might win you to renounce

Your evil attitude towards the faith!

*Sig.* Chafe not sore places: rather, woman-like,

Apply some healing of a blither speech!

*Blanche.* Well, shall we hawk? the day is very bright,

And I would prove the palfrey of your choice.

Or shall we stroll together in the close?

*Sig.* [*To* BLANCHE.] So let it be; our orchard shades are fair!

[*To the Servant.*] We shall not ride this morning: take the horse. [*Dismounts.*

*Blanche.* To some remembrance, how supremely fair!

Yet cold the charm

Of scenes in tame, pale moods revisited,

That once were rosy heaven for young love!

*Sig.* Yet are we fast friends, and the trees remain.

*Blanche.* Fast friends! alas! but were we never more?

Lord Wenceslas more hateful every day

Grows to my heart, albeit I tend him well—

A puny, dwindling mockery of man!

My life hath broken her fair promises,

All, all to me! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Orchard of the Castle close to the Terrace.*

*Enter* SIGISMUND and BLANCHE.

*Blanche.* Well may I curse the hour

When you gave counsel to me, lying here,

That I should wed a miserable sot!

My freedom! what avails it?

You are cold!

*Sig.* Nay, say not so; no fuller draughts of life,

Ruby-red, sparkling, hath my spirit quaffed,

Than those thy queenly hand poured out for me.

My splendid star, my radiance of night!

Much I repent that counsel; and yet, *Blanche,*

'Twas barely counsel! nor knew I the knight,

As now I know him!

You are beautiful!

On warm white undulations of your heart

Warm pearls lie heaving; while the satin flushed

Yields, a soft calyx to the waxen flower

Of your white bosom blossoming, white flower,

Tinct with rose-violet of applebloom,

Dark hair, one misty night above your brow,

Royally diademed with stars! Ah! foot,

Of slenderest symmetry, why hide thee now

Behind a sheen of gold-inwoven cloud?

I am your slave again, arrive what may!

I will lie upon your bosom's ocean—

Yea, drown, and perish there!

*Blanche.*

First hear me, friend,

And calm yourself a moment while I speak.

*Sig.* Ah! the rapturous hours

Of rushing through sunlight upon wild wings

Of winds, in likeness of Arabian

Horses, fire-eyed, with you for page most fair

Attendant, all your beauty wavering

Subtly between the lady and the boy!

Or when, in like disguise, you rode with me

To spear the bristling boar among black pines,

Bold as Adonis, flying from Cytheræ!

I have loved the clash and storm of battletide,

Upon those radiant plains of Lombardy;

I am a wild steer of the forest free,

And cannot school myself to wear the yoke!

*Blanche.* You cannot, Sigismund? are you still he

I knew of old? You would revive the past,

Because the present seems so little fair.

*Sig.* Alas, we age! all, lady mine, but you!

*Blanche.* Know you that I have seen your northern maiden?

Is not the wild steer captive to the kid?

Yet you are restless in your silken bonds,

It is reported, and yourself confirm.

*Sig.* How! you have seen her?

Whom, then, have you seen?

*Blanche.* Surely, the lady of your later love.

*Sig.* Such an one have I never even named!

*Blanche.* 'Tis even so, but hearken, Sigismund.

Do you remember when the delicate flower  
Of pear and apple, wafted from young sprays,  
Fell, soft as tender day dreams of young love,  
Into warm grass; while song-birds in full  
song

Dipped shimmering athwart the open blue?  
Above your terrace, where red roses twine,  
Where o'er the balustrade we saw yon river  
Gleam through so many subtly varying  
tones

Of bloomy verdure, tender-moulded clouds,  
Manifold even as the sunny themes,  
Our mutual converse winding visited?

And then my foolish hand was on your  
heart,

While you were telling me of one you knew  
In other lands—in England; and you told  
The place where you had known her, yet her  
name

You told not; but my fancy, swift as light,  
Glanced over damsels whom I deemed, per-  
chance,

You might have known among those English  
clouds.

And, look you, when I spake the name of one,  
Under my foolish hand I felt your heart

Throb loudly, tho' you said it was not she!

Now, lately, I, compelled to cross the  
wave,

Casually lighted on the very maid,  
Far-off, retired, reputed a wed wife.

*Sig.* Reputed! How?

*Blanche.* Nay, do not interrupt!

She did not bear your title, nor your name.  
But I found also on her chamber wall  
Rude-drawn memorials of pleasant scenes,  
Where you two met, and loved, Count  
Sigismund!

Ah! poet, thinker, warrior, feudal lord,  
Would surely weary soon of such a pen!  
Fold for tame flocks, not free magnanimous  
kings,

Whose roar dissolves the forest-heart with  
fear!

To stagnate with a mild monotonous girl,  
Dull, level, stale, and common as straight  
roads,

Interminable over weariest wastes,  
Were worthy of a plodding hind, not you.

So, I, as by mere casual allusion,  
Conversing with the lady, spake of thee,  
And of our friendship, telling all the tale  
Of your wild life—what terrible dark deeds,  
'Tis well attested, the grey castle sees!  
But I so fashioned my report that she  
Should know the man she deems her wedded  
lord

And my so faithless criminal are one.

Alas, poor wretch! she thinks you married  
her!

Well, that was cruel!

What a life were his,

If e'er the truant sheep returned to fold!

And you—you passed for sheep immaculate,  
Being all wolf!

She must be innocent

Indeed, for my revealing seemed a blow  
That smote her deadly white, and made her  
reel:

She shook, all wan and 'wildered, though  
revenge,

With hatred, kindled in the meek blue eyes,  
Ere I concluded all my torturing tale—

Only no spoken word avowed the stab,

Nor aught of her relation with the fiend!

So I dissolved a deadly witch's spell,  
That held you mouldering in ignoble ease,  
Far from your nativesphere of governance! . . .  
The Viper doth invite you to Milan,  
Where you may reinforce the Ghibelline.  
Shorn Samson making sport for Philistines  
Is no fair sight!—

Now hearken, Sigismund!

Old Wenceslas—he is ailing more and more—  
The journeying sun will not behold him long!

And afterward—you know, the barony

Passes to me, by special ordinance.

Your rich lands and my own, administered

Wisely, were verily a kingdom, love!

As Danube from his fairy crystal springs,

Lowly meandering, till the tributaries,

Lavishing multitudinous water-wealth,

Exalt him to a royal rolling river—  
 So rose the rule-born House of Austria  
 From fusion of fair counties to a throne,  
 Till towering, it wore imperial  
 Purple of Cæsar, and the triple crown :  
 Even so, my Sigismund, our own may rise !  
 Why, your strong ancestors were sovereign  
 In Rheinthal, ere this very Hapsburgh  
     wheeled,  
 Shadowing with vast vans, to swallow all !  
 Doth no ambition pulse in your blue  
     blood? . . .

You know whose child my child is, Sigismund !

*Sig.* Ah ! creep not round me with your  
     charms accurst,

Lamian woman ! Cease to dazzle thus,  
 Consuming glamour of infernal joy !  
 I fling thee back thine evil ! I will tell  
 The Judge one half of what men call my sin  
 Is all thine own, thou Genius of Death !

So you have slain my darling, slain my dove !  
 My one oasis fire and sword devour !  
 Once was I partly yours : I knew you not.  
 Nor had I then been lulled to holier moods,  
 By heavenlier music, in a lovelier air,  
 Near yon pure fountain of tranquillity !  
 Now only the hot sense rebellious  
 Yields to your sway : the soul abides un-  
     moved

As Ocean's heart, calm under his loud  
     waves !

Your dark dominion hath departed ! Yea,  
 Degrees there are in human infamy !  
 I am no saint ; yet in those awful spheres  
 Of torment, visioned by the Florentine,  
 Mine were one grade nearer to Light than  
     yours !

*Blanche.* What of your sham espousals,  
     then, Sir Count ?

*Sig.* My sham espousals ! Madam, there  
     were none !

If a too guileless innocence may fall  
 Into abysses of flower-wreathen wrong,  
 Yet doth your serpent wisdom of the world,  
 Down in his dust, from blind denial err,  
 Incredulously scorning yon pure heights,  
 Whence eagles, whose calm eyes behold the  
     sun,

Winged as with lightning, thunderously  
     swoop !

We are espoused ! To her belongs my name !  
 Only nor she, nor her sole kinsman, knew  
 Aught of my stained glory : so I won  
 Her trustful to conceal our nuptial bond  
 In a remote retirement, for awhile  
 To wear a humbler title than her due ;  
 Alleging very urgent and grave cause  
 In honour not divulgeable to her ;  
 But fearing verily lest wanton tongues  
 (In our conspicuous order were she set)  
 Might sully a sweet ignorance with foul  
 And bitter truth ; therefore, I hid her far  
 From all vain clamour—from infatuate toil,  
 Wherewith our moonstruck masque of History  
 Ever from nothing unto nothing reels.  
 Hers was a seraph's faithful innocence !  
 I know not how she strayed away from heaven.  
 I think they must be searching for her  
     still

Mournfully yonder, for they would not dream  
 Of looking in so mean a world as ours !

So I concealed her in a forest shrine,  
 Adoring there, at rest, and all alone. . . .  
 But you have found her, Eleanor, Medea !

*Blanche.* Merciful saints ! that I have loved  
     this man !

Imbrued white hands in crime for such an  
     one !

*Sig.* In crime ! What crime ? You spake  
     of Wenceslas . . .

*Blanche.* Sir Count, no crime. I have  
     committed none.

Lord Wenceslas is failing fast, I said.  
 I hope that's no offence in him, or me . . .  
 Is then adultery no crime, my lord ?

But you, sir, you are neither fish nor fowl !  
 Eunuch unfunctioned for the fruitful use  
 Of either Vice or Virtue ! All adrift—  
 Traitor to Ormuzd and to Ahriman !  
 Trusted by neither, shuffling 'twixt the two ;  
 No citizen of Satan's realm nor God's ;  
 Spurned out of heaven, vomited from hell !  
 Tossed in blind Limbo, mockery of all  
     blasts

From all four quarters whence a blast may  
     blow !

Eddying dried excremental dust for ever!  
But go; your mild-eyed saint awaits you; go!  
No Devastation strides upon your hearth!  
Nor spits and dances, a fell fury there!

[Exit.

SCENE IV.—*The old English Manor-house ;  
a Chamber therein. An Autumn After-  
noon.*

*Enter* CONSTANCE and SIGISMUND.

*Cons.* My trust in you is dead! you slew  
it! where

Is now the perfect lover of my heart?

You never loved me! What a fool was I!

*Sig.* Who doubts it, dear? Yet am I not  
forsworn.

I loved you. But you weary me with vain  
Reproaches. I have told you lawful love  
May live a house-mate with fair concubines  
In a man's heart: you are too short, too  
blind,

To see beyond your own small garden, dear!  
I warned you not to harbour the vile lies  
Of that loose thing who came and babbled  
here,

Till they were purged and disinfected for you.  
Now they have brought contagion to your  
soul.

I never loved her: she would ruin us!

*Cons.* You may assure her that you loved  
not me!

How can I tell? Ah! where is my fond  
faith?

*Sig.* Descend from your proud palaces of  
snow

To my warm human world with me, since I  
Cannot breathe yonder! I condole with you  
That you have wed a mortal by mistake—  
Being born a goddess; but now never dream  
Of hoisting me to godhood! Be content,  
Like a true woman, to accept yourself  
My lowlier station of humanity.

You've got a man: cease then, with mouth  
agape

And foolish face, to wonder and to rail  
At him for being like his fellow mortals!

For learn, good Constance, none of us are  
chaste;

But only brave, and true to our pledged word.  
*Cons.* To men! To women falser than  
the pit!

*Sig.* Do as we all do. Now you know  
my story,

Henceforth with honour may you grace your  
gems,

Midmost the galaxy of nobles: this

I do repent me that my care withheld.

You shall have your freedom; only leave me  
mine.

. . . Yea, cease, madam, your damned reitera-  
tion!

Now you are wroth, you are not beautiful.

*Cons.* Refrain from insult. Much I fear  
that all

She told was truth. Have you not glossed  
foul crimes

With those smooth words you are the  
despot of,

Seeking to make me partner in your sin,

By a light acquiescence? I, alas!

Am no more child, but woman! My sweet  
dreams

Melt, as from one who wakes from sleep to  
hear

Toll through a dungeon hoarse deep tones  
of doom!

Ah! when you lately came to me from  
yonder,

After I knew—Sigismund! how you swore,  
Weeping here at my feet, henceforth for ever

To loose all hold upon your guilt, if only,

If only she, of whom you named you black  
Betrayed, could but pardon; were it possible!

You sobbed—but no! she could not pardon!  
never!

Now you retract your solemn pledge, your vow!  
You are going: and you will not promise me

Your future shall break wholly with your  
past! . . .

Was it then a mere jest, the solemn oath,

The agony of repentant faith forsworn? . . .

What if I took you at your word, Sir Count?

What if I did become the thing you hint at?

Do you indeed advise that? Speak! You do?

*Sig.* Follow your fancy! only take Discretion,  
 The grave duenna, with you. You are a woman;  
 I am a man; there lies the difference!  
 Love and lust are not sundered, you believe.  
 I did repent—I do repent. I did  
 Intend to live for thee alone; but thou  
 Art not the May I worshipped! harsh, sour,  
 jealous!  
 If I fulfil not your ideal, you  
 Fulfil not mine. I may be disappointed.  
 You have turned shrew, now: were you a  
 true goddess.  
 Your white would suffer no defilement from  
 Our miry ways of daily drudgery.  
 But you must own, alas! it is not so.  
*You* have no force to straighten a bent soul—  
 Though half I hoped it when I wedded you.  
 The task demands a mightier arm than yours!  
 You were but sent to yield me a brief glimpse  
 Of far-off Peace, forbidden to my feet  
 For ever! yea, to mock me! for you cannot  
 Save me; but I can—I will—draw you  
 under!  
 Ah, Virtue! Virtue! why art thou not fair,  
 As is thy siren evil-minded sister?  
 Where is thy zest? thy salt, thy seasoning?  
 Ah! where the soft allurement and the  
 spell? . . .  
 Now Rose, whom you detest, and even  
 Blanche—  
 They feel for one; they comprehend—  
*Cons.* Be still!  
 I and the children yet have a protector  
 From these, your dastard outrages! to him,  
 To him will I appeal! Beware, Sir Count!  
*Sig.* I do detest you! and I scorn your  
 dotard  
 Guardian! Your wild threats are impotent.  
 Declare war at your peril! Madam, I  
 Will immolate you to my reputation!  
 Ralph shall be taken from you! I am his  
 father!  
*Cons.* (in a broken voice, after a pause).  
 If I grow harsh and jealous, whose the  
 fault? . . .  
 O! where am I? Can this be Sigismund? . . .

And Ralph! wilt thou not hearken even for  
 him?  
 . . . Sometimes I fear thee, and I deem that  
 thou  
 Art verily beside thyself! thy furies,  
 For naught or less! thy cruel mockery  
 Of all that's purest, holiest in our love!  
 Thy sneers malignant, cutting, like a blast  
 Of Polar night, the quick nerves of my  
 heart! . . .  
 You see me pale and shrunken, a mere ghost!  
 So racked with pain. Why did you marry me?  
 A simple trustful maiden, all unworthy  
 To be the sharer of your thoughts, your  
 schemes!  
 Who must recoil from sin; for sin will seem  
 Ever sin to her! You weary of me now.  
 My youth, and beauty, as you named it,  
 fail! . . .  
 Why not have wed some lady of the world,  
 Who would not importune you with such love  
 As this of mine that irks you? Yet, alas!  
 I deemed you true when you did ask for it!  
 I know not how to love as they do! Ah!  
 [*She weeps, and seems about to fall.*  
*SIGISMUND rushing forward sup-  
 ports and embraces her.*  
*Sig.* Darling, I am a monster! pardon!  
 pardon!  
 Once more forgiveness! Once more only,  
 love!  
 For you, and for the precious child, I long  
 To be less evil! Woe is me! I cannot! . . .  
 Help me! nay, who shall help me? for I am  
 damned!

[*Exeunt.*]

### ACT III

SCENE I.—*Some years have passed. The  
 same old Manor-house in England.  
 The Library.* SIR WALTER DAVENANT  
*standing up expectant.*

*Enter* COUNT SIGISMUND.

*Sir Walter.* You are come! she has asked  
 all night to see you, Count.  
 She will not long remain with us below.

You are faint—refresh yourself with yonder wine.

*Sig. (swallowing some wine).* Is it so desperate? I feared the worst.

How shall I meet her? May I see the boy?

I am weary with long sleeplessness, and toil  
Of journey. I have sought in vain for death,  
In that fierce onset of the furious Guelph!

In more consuming ruin of revelry,  
And damned debauch, or sterile toil of brain,  
I have affronted him! from gashed she-bears,  
Robbed of their whelps, and from the tusk-  
boar,

I have demanded death! He shuns me.  
May I

Look on my boy, Sir Walter?

*Sir W.* No, miserable man! forget not  
now

The covenant between us! She and I  
Refrained from trailing before all the world  
Your knightly name and honour in the dust,  
Because you swore for ever to renounce  
All claim to Constance and your infant son;  
Because you swore never to see them more,  
Unless myself, her guardian, and she  
Lifted the bar: thus did we write to you,  
With oath yourself assenting.

You avowed, in sooth, 'twere better for the  
child

That you should tarry beyond sight of him,  
Even beyond his very knowledge: yea,  
You thanked me for my guardianship of both  
Her and the child; averring this fulfilled  
Your dearest hope for your beloved son.

You, who are not ruler of yourself,  
Fallen ever further from the heights of God,  
How should you rule, or mould the plastic  
soul

Of indeterminate youth, enthroning there  
The ideal form and lineaments of man?  
We have kept your social seat for you; nor  
driven

You from it with well-earned infamy,  
Cain-branded, scourged, a hissing, and a  
scorn!

Yea, my sweet ward, your so injured spouse,  
I well believe, reserved your place for you  
I' the very sanctuary of her white heart,

With faith you would, arisen from the grave,  
Throw off death-cerements; dweller in the  
tombs,

Would yet come clothed, and in your proper  
mind,

To the feet of Jesus, home to her and Him.  
But you plunged ever deeper in the slough!  
You broke her loving heart; you mocked at  
God,

Who paused, with axe uplifted, ere He felled.  
Weighed in heaven's balances, you are found  
wanting!

All's over! only for the sake of Ralph  
Do I not hound you from the face of men!  
You *were* a generous champion of the poor;  
Administering the trust committed you,  
Your barony, with wisdom; a stern foe  
To every insolence of force and fraud.

But now your soul is gangrened to the core.  
There is no sound spot in it; for evil men,  
And fouler women, you have cherished  
yonder,

A nest of snakes, infect you with their venom,  
Till you too hiss more venomous than they!  
Yea, and your own inordinate luxury  
Of wantonness hath laid waste, like a fire,  
Your manhood, all dissolving and devoured.  
You have given base, wrong verdicts: you  
allow

Your abbot's tyranny; and worse, you winked  
At that most dastard outrage, which one  
wrought,

Who dwelt at Ravensburg, upon the  
maiden. . . .

Hast thou not striven moreover with false lore  
To poison, to corrupt, the innocent?  
Only that stainless nature of my ward  
Revolted from thy falsehoods; brooked them  
not;

Might not be soiled by smooth, sinister guile:  
Yet shrank, with wholesome loathing of the  
pure,

From long familiarity with sin,  
Masked in the fascination of thy form.

Now dost thou dare to ask to see the child?  
What wouldst thou with him? What hath  
he to do

With such as thou?

*Sig.* But I *will* see him, sir ; he is my own !

*Sir W.* Nay, since you so insist, I must reveal

What else I had fain hidden from your sight.  
The boy, discovering that his mother dies,  
Beside herself, because you did her wrong,  
Hath come to hate you—will not go with you !

*Sig.* He hates me !—nay, O spare me the last blow !

Say the boy hates me not, most cruel man !  
So *you* have done this ! you shall answer it !

[*Half draws his sword.*]

*Sir W.* Stand back ! be calmer ! No—I did it not.

Nor she. But in her spirit's wanderings,  
Beyond her power to guide or guard, wild words

Escaped concerning you ; and so he learned  
The bitter truth—dare not approach the boy !

[*A pause.*]

*Sig.* (*sinking on a chair*). Forgive me, sir ; for you are good and true.

And yet you judge me hardly : I am scarce  
The devil you depict, though I be vile !  
Thank you for all ! Deep homage of my heart  
I render on my knees—yea, I am lost,  
A lost soul, sir ; yet I would ask of you  
One favour—no, I would not bear the boy  
Hence, though I purposed so, for all the world.

I would not bear him hence with me to yonder  
Hell of a castle, though the fiends be gone,  
And never will return ; yet I, the worst,  
Should still be there ; so he shall here abide—  
Only I pray you that I may once more  
Behold his face, before I go away  
For ever—he himself knowing naught of it.

*Sir W.* Come here : look out from yonder window ; there

Upon the lawn he is playing with my son,  
Near to our ancient cedar ; do not lean,  
Lest he should see you—by the rhododendron.

[*SIGISMUND starts, rises, and looks out.*]

*Sig.* God bless you ! It is he ! it is the child !  
Under those yellow locks of the laburnum—  
Behold ! the children playing, with their roses  
All glowing in the rose of radiant eve !  
Mine is in purple velvet, and his hair

Curls brown, like that of Constance—so it used.  
How tall ! how fair !—methinks I see him now  
Asleep, and she is by him, and the moon—

*Ralph.* Now, Edgar, look how high I throw the ball !

*Sig.* His voice ! the silvery voice that thrilled me through,  
Lovelier than lark's note, or the nightingale's !  
In olden time—and now—that other voice !—  
Whose was it ?

*Sir W.* Come, my lord, and you shall see !

[*SIR WALTER opens two doors, and leads into a bedchamber.*]

Constance, Count Sigismund is here ! (Perchance

This will arouse her.) Now approach the bed.

*Cons.* (*on the couch, white and wan, a wild look in her eyes*). Who spoke ?

[*She looks fixedly at SIGISMUND.*]

You are not Sigismund !

'Tis Sigismund I want : you are a fiend !

*Sig.* (*throws himself by the couch and takes her hand*).

Oh, Constance ! can you pardon ? I am he,  
Your Sigismund ! and I repent—and all  
Are gone for ever. Is it now too late ?

*Cons.* Take the fiend away !

He is pretending to be Sigismund !  
Oh, God, preserve me from him ! Ralph !  
Sir Walter !

*The DOCTOR enters with SIR WALTER.*

*The Doctor.* Withdraw, my lord ! she does not know you. Go !

[*SIGISMUND hides his face in his hands, and withdraws slowly, moaning.*]

SCENE II.—*Among the Mountains of Switzerland.*

SIGISMUND, with a little boy, named RUDOLPH, the son of one of his tenants.

*Sig.* (*now to himself, now to Rudolph*). Come Rudolph, let us rest beneath the pine ! . . .  
Do you love the music of the wind therein ?  
Dark, prophet-like, it broods above the abyss,

Murmuring mystic sounds oracular! . . .  
My damned old castle's hidden in the mist. . .  
The grapes! I know they swung right  
temptingly

Against your lips, as we were sauntering  
Among the trellised vines; but what will  
those

Who own them say? their bloom is like yon  
bloom

Of dusking hills and vales—the torrent roars,  
Thundering to the gorge! How lovely! See,  
A snow-peak flushed as from still fire within!  
Purple abide the storm-rent rugged crests  
Of kingly mountains: hearken! far-off bells  
Of lowing herds descending—there an eagle  
Screams, as he wheels, now dark, now lumi-  
nous;

Glooming by rocky steeps of pine; illumed  
In violet air between them—there is storm  
Impending! viewless winds are marshalling  
Clouds in battalions, ominous, ash-pale,  
Fire-tinct, dusk waves of some inverted sea!  
From lonely tarns the storm-spirit hath  
spoken.

O for this aimless dissonance of pain,  
A moment's curdling in benign, sublime  
Life universal, to dissolve, to cease.  
Its aberration of life personal,  
Being all the grand world meaneth, and  
would tell!

How very like is he to Ralph, my child!  
The form, turn of the head, the face, the  
voice!

He always brings me flowers, runs after me,  
Lisping his words in that sweet way of Ralph.

My boy will come, so soon as I am gone.  
Walter will guide and guard him, and well  
rule

The people for awhile: I have no heart  
To rule them any longer: formidable  
Trouble impends between the peasants, and  
Us nobles—mine own evil deeds have bound  
These hands, unnerved by misery and crime,  
And doubt: my part is played; a paltry part,  
Indifferently played! my folk will love  
Walter and Ralph—alas! that he must be  
Without his mother! I!er I behold, as erst,  
In virginal violet, flowers in her hair!

Ah! how happy we four might have been.  
All's over! Death involves us in the mist!  
I have done this—my own beloved child  
Abhors me!—surely such a punishment  
Is more than I can bear! and yet the past  
Melts, like snowflakes in water: all my life  
Passes before me, impalpable as cloud.  
Yea, even he and she seem very vague.  
Am I then failing? long sleep will be sweet.  
Life looms before me, some receding shore,  
Viewed from a vessel, wandering, ocean-  
ward—

The elixir I have taken drowns me!

Who shall foretell the scope of this revolt?  
The Abbot countermined my policy,  
By threatening exposure, degradation.  
And how could I, myself dishonouring  
What common folk count virtue, with bold  
face,

Or heart unshamed, exhort them to embrace  
Virtues, that are their welfare, though I sought  
In very deed their weal at intervals?  
No less than fear, this paralysed mine arm,  
Dissolving nobler councils of the mind  
With impotent division and despair,  
Until their grave assembling ceased, and foul  
Revel invaded the high council-halls!  
Sempach, Nœfels, Morgarten, wrested power  
From our proud caste for ever; and men ask  
Wherefore I would surrender all the rights  
Of mine own flesh and blood, without the  
leave

Asked of inheritors unborn! What end?  
I know not: once I loved the herd: 'twas ere  
I knew them; they are insolent, unthankful,  
And ever varying: *we* are tyrannous:  
What then? the sorry jest of human life  
Is worth nor love, nor hate, nor thought,  
nor toil!

I cannot feign a young enthusiasm  
For any vermin of them, as they rage!

I see mine innocent youth, as if I saw  
Another childhood, half resembling mine;  
And scarcely may recall as mine what I  
Knew once well for my longings and my  
fears.

The mother, and the sister, whom I loved,  
Clinging to, when this child, that I behold,

So like myself, together with them roamed  
 Over these very wilds, are dim and far  
 Phantoms of my remembrance, once so near;  
 A very portion of myself, and all,  
 Without whose loving faces there was naught  
 Imaginable in the world for me!—the caldron  
 In yonder forest! then my father lived;  
 And on his back he bore me, wearied out,  
 To where we made a fire; dancing around  
 A caldron with the crone some named a  
 witch—

Those bilberries! I well recall their flavour—  
 While more world-shadowing events lie  
 hidden.

Ye bubbles, our dread World-Magician  
 blows,

Named by men glory, love, or liberty,  
 And high ideals, ye are all illusion,  
 That idly floating fever human souls  
 With longing, with despair! to burst, to  
 vanish,  
 When we poor children touch them; and  
 before!

How solitary is a human soul!  
 Unfathomable abysses island it,  
 With only far-off voices wandering  
 From nearest, dearest, over the dim sea.  
 Our loneliness is only lonelier,  
 When we are dying; and around the dead!  
 Constance herself, tho' I forget it now,  
 Being pure, was somewhat merciless to wrong;  
 Might not descend from her snow-throne  
 to me;

Herself not tempted, with a narrower range  
 Of fantasy and thought; the guardian  
 Warping her young soul to severity—  
 Often herself would roughen with small  
 cares—

Could Constance ere have ripened to a harsh  
 Unloveliness, as is the wont with most  
 Who pass their primal youth and earlier love?  
 Thy faults to mine were ripples to a surge! . . .  
 My darling, if there be another life,  
 With one light whisper tell me I am forgiven!  
 Alas! thy sphere and mine are worlds apart!  
 Yea, more apart beyond the grave than  
 here! . . .

Hearken! the convent's mellow Angelus,

Floating in waifs of melody from far!  
 The world is fair! a momentary wrench  
 Will be the parting from it—after, rest! . . .  
 Farewell, dear poesy, my sweet companion!  
 And thou with awful face, Philosophy!  
 I know not if thy solemn light indeed  
 Be light auroral from the sun of souls,  
 Beyond our dark horizon; or a fire,  
 Luring to cruel doom predestinate!

Weary am I of passion's tyranny!  
 Of sanguinary wars all vain with it!  
 Frustrate all efforts of my strength mature!  
 I cannot lift the rock that crushes me!  
 I shake it: then it settles down again!  
 Yea, once, a youth, I wrestled in long prayer  
 With tears of blood, entreating help from  
 heaven;

Fainting before the flaming gate, fast barred  
 With triple adamant, a deaf-dumb void!  
 No power in the world may liberate the slave  
 Who is self-enslaved. Surely I know of none!  
 My life and love are ashes! only sparks  
 Of hell-fire linger in me: this, the end.  
 I had a friend, but he hath fallen away;  
 I had a child, a wife, youth's rapture—all  
 are gone.

Shall I wait until contemptuous Nature jogs  
 The poisons, she in mockery bestowed  
 (And I would neither eat them, nor refrain  
 From tasting) out of a limp, shrivelled hand,  
 When I, turned dotard, drivel, with numb  
 sense

Grown impotent?—ah! then I may "repent"!  
 Seem to yield up what she in scorn resumes!  
 No!—dare I slay myself? They say a beast  
 Dares not—or knows not how. Have I  
 enough

Of man left in me to do even this?  
 Yet I would not my death should seem self-  
 slaughter.

. . . The child—yes—how shall I dispose  
 of him?

I heard strange sounds. Rudolph! what ails  
 the boy?

Wert thou not sobbing? Rudolph! why these  
 tears?

Answer, my child! you were looking at the  
 moon.

She should be full—Heavens! what a sight!  
Only a quarter of her visible!  
She seems oppressed with nightmare; stifling,  
drowns

In a lurid shroud of blood—'tis ominous!  
Are they loud shouts of multitudes we hear?  
Or baying of far wolves—or owls. A clash  
Of arms! it can be nothing else! Yon fires  
Are verily not the village lights? Some  
castle

Blazes!—not mine—I know not which——

*Rudolph.* Ah! never  
Shall we reach home, Sir Count—I am afraid!  
There are ill ghosts around us. Mary! save!

*Sig.* Nay, Rudolph! you are safe with me,  
sweet child!

But did you know this fighting was at hand?  
I came but yesterday to Ravensburg.  
There is a trampling on the track above,  
As of armed cavalry! I'll go and see.  
Wait here till I return, a moment, boy.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE III.—*Above, on a track winding round  
the Mountain; Trees below, Rocks above.*

*Enter the LADY BLANCHE, with Knights in  
rich armour, riding; pennons, banners,  
men with flaming torches, and a large  
body of men-at-arms defiling in the rear.*

*Blanche.* You here, Sir Count! Do you  
not take a side?

Are you then as a stranger in our wars?  
You wander to and fro upon the earth—  
Like Satan—and perchance know naught of  
this.

We are going to give a lesson to the swine!

*Sig.* Madam, I do not take a side, you  
know.

*Blanche.* Ah! I remember! you are always  
neuter.

[*SIGISMUND turns away among the  
trees, by the path he has ascended.*

*As he goes, he hears a laugh from  
LADY BLANCHE and the Knights.*

*Sig. (muttering to himself).* If I could slay  
all these before I die—

And her—but let the vermin live—I care not.

SCENE IV.—*Same spot as in Scene II.*

*Enter SIGISMUND.*

*Sig.* Rudolph! where is the child? I left  
him here.

*A Voice (faintly, from below).* Count  
Sigismund!

*Sig.* Heavens! he has fallen! Call again!  
Where are you?

[*Looks down the abyss.*

I can see naught. Help! Ho! one bring a  
torch!

*Rud. (below).* I am clinging to a bush: I  
can no longer——

*Sig.* There he is! hold on tightly! I am  
coming!

[*He climbs down the rock with difficulty.*

Now I am firm: courage, Rudolph, my boy!  
Give me one hand: so: climb now: you are  
safe!

[*RUDOLPH, after climbing up, looks down  
for SIGISMUND, who has disappeared.*

*Rud.* Sir Count, where are you? Answer,  
dear Sir Count!

*After a pause, re-enter LADY BLANCHE on  
horseback, with a Torchbearer.*

*Blanche.* Who called? How now, boy?  
Where's Count Sigismund?

*Rud. (in tears).* I cannot tell: he saved  
me! Look for him!

Just there I scrambled—I fell down, you  
know—

I was falling lower, when he pulled me up!

*Blanche.* Advance the torch to the edge of  
the abyss:

I could not look: it gives me vertigo.

*Soldier (with torch).* Sir Count!

[*After a pause.*] Madam, I nothing see—nor  
ought can hear—

Only the echo of my call; unless

It be some demon answering. Ave Mary!

*Rud.* O call him! lady, do you call him!  
Count!

Where are you? Rudolph wants you! He's  
my father!

*Sol.* Madam, he could not climb up other-  
where  
Than here. He must have fallen. Under  
this  
Sheer giddy precipice the gletscher lies. . . .  
I fear he's now with Mary—or the devil!  
*Rud.* Oh Sigismund! my father!  
*Blanche* (*crossing herself*). Poor knight!  
—there is no hope of saving him. . . .  
And we must on: it is a pretty boy.  
Boy, *I* will be your *mother*, if you like;  
And you shall be my pretty page: come with  
me!  
Take up the child, and set him on the horse,  
With John, our trooper. How he sobs! be  
still! [*Exeunt.*]

CURTAIN FALLS.

## PART II.—RALPH

### ACT IV

SCENE I.—*A small Bay of the Cornish Coast.*

*Enter* LADY BERTHA.

*Bertha* (*sol.*). Oh, what delicious shells!  
the yellow shore,  
All little shells, or whole, or mutilate,  
White rose-petals, curled cowries, palmer-  
shells,  
Orange and crimson, small patellas, veined  
With ultramarine; how delicate, fairylike!  
Each one a happy, innocent life vanished!  
While, with delicious plashing, the clear wave,  
Green as live emerald, falls: white lace of  
foam  
Falls with it, blown, like cirrus, from the crest  
Of joy's own fluctuant crystal, in the blue!  
How do they leap, the billows, heaving,  
laughing,  
Along dark crimson marble, and moss-green  
Of cliff sea-sculptured, or lone island-pillars;

Whispering in low caves, where Shadow  
dwells,  
With her penumbra, a thin water-froth!  
The sand is all unfooted, save by elves,  
Or feet of toying wavelets, to loose lines  
Rippling the paleness in their tidal dance.  
Nay, yonder by the cave behold a dint  
Of some small foot; a single line of dints. . . .  
*Ralph* (*sol., swimming out at sea*).  
So buoyant are the waves, they shift their  
green  
Edges athwart blue air; each crest's curled  
hollow  
Gleams, fronting sunlight; while I swim I see  
A restless sand gleam under: how one's  
breath  
Goes with their toppling! now for a long dive!  
Here comes a giant; he will tumble me! . . .  
I am drawn down again! nay, let me rise,  
Ye playful Nereids! I will escape you yet—  
Where shall I wash the shells from off my  
feet?  
There is a pool in yonder rock, I know,  
Where darting launces, many-coloured weeds,  
Floating all feathery, anemones,  
And tiny crabs inhabit—on the rock  
I may dry me in the sun. Where's Bertha  
now?  
[*RALPH, after a while, seeks BERTHA.*  
Where have you been, love, since I saw you  
last?  
Did you go very, very far away?  
Here let us lie on seathrift, in the shade.  
I have made a song, and now I'll sing it you  
Though I'm no poet, and would not be one.  
I'd rather be a statesman, or a soldier:  
That, or the like of that, when we return  
To Ravensburg I will be: and I hear  
We shall return before the year is out.  
Ah! how I long to see the glorious land  
Of our forefathers! of the lakes and snow!  
But look how you have made me minnesinger,  
For a little while! Now listen to my lay.

Many a summer isle,  
In a summer sea,  
Feels the morning smile,  
As I thee!

Many a blooming grove,  
In a sunny bay,  
Happy will not move  
From the double day;  
So lingers Love,  
All one May,  
Over thee!

Well, is it pretty?

*Bertha.* It is beautiful!

*Ralph.* My fee, then! I am too poor to sing unpaid.

*Bertha.* What do you want? You know that I have nothing.

*Ralph.* Nothing! why only you have anything!

Ah! do not look so lovely, *alma mia*!

*Bertha.* When did you learn Italian, fair Sir Count? [*They kiss each other.*]

*Ralph.* I never can forget when first I saw you.

Weary and warm I came unto a stream,  
Bubbling among forget-me-nots, and green  
Lush planes, or willows, where light water-falls

Made a cool plashing sound; there was a rift  
Here in the lattice of interlacing foliage,  
That bowered the water; a like interval  
Fronted me on the other side of it.

A mossy lawn, a vivid and soft sward,  
Sloped in blithe sunshine here, with flowering  
Rhododendrons and azaleas embossed.

The flowers and leaves were mirrored in the  
lymph;

But a far lovelier form they seemed to shrine!  
This made me gaze above; a maiden stooped  
Gathering water in her frail pink palms,  
And drinking in them; though it oozed and  
spilt,

'Twixt her translucent delicate finger-roses.  
Warm sunlight trickled to her raven hair,  
And face rich-hued; she looked a startled  
fawn

When she beheld me; for I could not choose  
But gaze upon her—tell me, *Bertha*, could I?  
Soon you returned my gaze, and we essayed  
Some insignificant words; the waterfall  
Would not cease babbling; so we only moved,  
You know, our lips in sight of one another!

*Bertha.* Do I not well remember? when we met

After, you told me what it was you said! . . .  
Dear *Ralph*! you have not spoken of your sister.

*Ralph.* My sister!—ah! you know not—she is dead.

*Bertha.* Nay, I knew not—and ye were very fond!

*Ralph.* Ah, speak not of her!—we were playfellows—

(*His voice falters, and he is deeply moved; after a pause*)

When shall you go yourself to Switzerland?  
Your lady mother said it would be soon—  
I hear of grave disturbances at home.

After my father died (we scarce know how)  
The like were quenched with furious cruelty.  
But now the poor, intolerably laden,  
Murmur again: unless the lords concede  
Their clamorous demands, Sir *Walter* says,  
Terrible deeds of violence will follow.

*Bertha.* Your father! 'tis the first time you have named him.

*Ralph.* I know but little; still I gravely fear

He did not deal with mother as he ought.

And yet 'tis verily a hopeless task  
To image native forms of far events,  
With no distortion—so Sir *Walter* said,  
When reading with me the old chronicle.  
Surely my father was no common man!  
My guardian will not speak, though I would  
fain

Learn more: I know he was the people's  
friend;

A strange and lonely being of high powers,  
Which he abused, 'tis hinted, grievously.  
But then, his death! in saving a poor child,  
Himself fell o'er a precipice; nor ever  
His body could be found; I deem myself,  
The mighty glacier hides him in its heart!

*Bertha.* A melancholy story! but my mother

Was dearest friend of yours, you know; she spoke

Of yours as of some angel.

*Ralph.* So she was!

Ah, well! I would that we were married,  
love!

I'm glad it is to be at Ravensburg!  
And won't the masquerade be glorious?  
I scarcely deemed Sir Walter would consent!  
You recollect how strangely grave he looked,  
And how he shook his venerable head,  
When you and I, with Edgar, importuned?  
However, I shall be a knight, mine own  
Master, ere then; but one would not offend  
him,  
The dear old guardian!—It is late! fare-  
well!—

One more! Oh, such a long kiss ere I go!  
*Bertha.* Nay, Ralph! enough! leave me!  
ah! very soon  
We shall not leave each other any more—  
Morning or evening—how I pray for that!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*The Castle of Ravensburg.*  
*About two years after. A Gothic hall*  
*lighted. Masquerade, and dancing.*

*BERTHA is dressed as a page, and RALPH as*  
*a damsel: they are laughing and con-*  
*versing in a retired angle of the hall.*

*Ralph.* How it becomes you! mellow as a  
peach  
O' the sunny side, with your fine lashes long,  
Dark as our pine-boughs latticing blue water;  
Your slim round form; slight limbs of a  
gazelle!

Rare furs, and scarlet, broidered with fine  
gold!

It is a garb that you shall always wear!

*Bertha.* Thank you! But you forget your  
*rôle.* 'tis I

Should make such speeches to *you*, pretty  
maid!

Only I will not pay you compliments,  
Loveliest lady, of the snowy skin!

For all your satins and gemmed necklaces,  
And braided bloom-inwoven golden hair!

The hall looks well,  
With gleanings warm upon the panelling,

Broadswords, cuirasses, helms, and battle-  
targes.

But oh! how many ill-favoured people here!  
Look at the hideous distortion yonder  
In that vile mask!—he seems as if he watched  
Us twain. Who can he be? 'Tis like the  
son

Of that bad witch, the painted and repaired  
Old Lady Blanche, who frowned like ugliest  
sin,

When I so lightly tossed his suit aside—  
Now he is gone!—yon flame too near the  
arras

Flares: 'tis the sconce awry: look to it,  
dear!

*Ralph (goes and returns).* What do you  
say to our old lion yonder,

With such a mane? he's made of porphyry.

Not by the daïs: near the giant hearth!

Do you know what he is spouting now? 'tis  
wine!

I thought of that! a most original  
Device! most admirable!

*Bertha.* I believe

Thou hast partaken freely of the same,

Besides the banquet's fierier beverage!

*Ralph.* I know not when the blessed rite  
may be,

That shall declare us one—unless to-morrow.  
To-night they hold a conclave of the people.

I ought to go—shall I? There will be war

Ere long; we may be on the verge thereof!

*Bertha.* Go, if you ought, love! let me  
never hinder,

But help in all that's right. Ah! civil war

Is terrible: I would it were all over!

Who can foretell the issue? you espouse

Indeed the nobler side: I shall pray for  
you! . . .

O must you go to-night?—is strife so near?

Well, we are true to one another, love!

So we can wait awhile, if need be.

*Ralph.* Wait!

Nay, I cannot—but plague on all forebodings!

You come and dance! the music shall strike up

Without delay: I know not why they tarry.

I'll go and see. [*Music commences.*]

Now, *Bertha*, darling, come!

*Bertha.* O stupid boy! you never will remember!

You must not circle me with your white arm : I am the cavalier!

*Ralph.* No, Bertha! no!

I don't know how : it is impossible!

*[They dance, and while both are returning flushed to their place, the MASK they had observed whispers in RALPH'S ear.]*

*Ralph (to Bertha).* Fair sir, the gentleman would have me dance ;

So I will leave you for a little while.

*Mask (as he whirls round with RALPH, bends over him, and speaks low).*

Renounce the hand of Bertha : nay, you shall ! You must ! I'll speak a word to prove my power.

Do you know a tree, that grows within a garden

Of a certain northern land ? it hath one root,

But forketh early in two trunks full-leaved ; These marry leaves above : there is a cypher Of intertwined initials deeply graven

I' the growing ashwood—need I tell you more ?

*Ralph (turns pale, and after a pause speaks).*

And wilt thou use thy power, evil man ?

What do you seek ? say ! what do you demand ?

But never dream I will renounce my love !

*Mask.* Before to-morrow wanes you shall decide.

That is my sole condition, or I use

My power against you—do you know me ? I Am son to Lady Blanche : I want your Bertha :

You shall not have her !—think well over it.

*Ralph (after a pause).* I will : nay, I shall answer you to-night.

Meet me beside the old yew-avenue,

By the lowest stone of balustraded stairs—

In a rank place—at moonrise.

*Mask.* It is well.

*[Exit.]*

*Bertha.* What would the monster?—who is he ? you're pale !

*Ralph.* He gave me news I may not now discover ;

Momentous—I must leave you, love—Farewell !

I go to find Sir Walter. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III.—SIR WALTER in his Private Room.

*To him enter RALPH.*

*Ralph.* Uncle, one tells me that Chialderer Hath summoned all his followers to assemble This very night within the forest. I Would fain be there : perchance I may remain.

They must not move without us : you will hold

The castle, come what may ? I learn their plans

Grow near maturity : we stand prepared.

Uncle, wilt thou dismiss the guests for me ?

*Sir W.* But you look ill ! these mummeries are bane

To soul and body ! yet do I rejoice,

Knowing you single-hearted in the cause ;

Yea, prompt and bold—ah ! give your heart to God !

Does Bertha know of this ? Depart not thou

Until to-morrow : nay, thou art not able !

The Duke of Austria hath drawn the sword, It is rumoured, on their side ! But Heaven will help !

*Ralph.* 'Tis nothing, uncle ! pardon me ; for I

Will surely go to-night. Farewell ! farewell ! *[Exit.]*

*Sir W.* God bless the boy ! how beautiful and bold !

He may be made or marred yet : we have prayed.

I'll go to Bertha : Pastor John will grieve

That I permit these antics : how may I

Mix with them ? Well, Count Ralph is now the master.

*[Exit.]*

SCENE IV.—*The old Yew-avenue at Moonrise.*

*Enter RALPH, girt with a sword. BARON ADRIAN (the MASK) sits waiting on the lower stone of the balustraded stairs, also girt with a sword; the stairs descend to a rank, open space between the yew-terrace and a wood beyond.*

*Ralph.* What utter night beneath these sable yews! . . .

Or he—or I—no—he shall ne'er disgrace me—  
Nor force me to renounce my bride; my love! . . .

The castle towers in moonlight!

They are far  
Enough for this death-struggle: none comes here:

The place is rank and lone: men deem it haunted.

By God! it shall be haunted by some ghost  
Before the morning!—Yonder sits the man!  
(*He descends to ADRIAN.*) Sir, of us twain  
to-night one tarries here—

Or both—now draw! defend yourself!

(*He draws his sword.*) Your sword!

*Adrian (who rises).* I will not fight: so you would murder me!

*Ralph.* Murder! you are the better swordsmen, sir!

Defend yourself! you have a fairer chance  
Of life than I. Coward! you are afraid!

*Adrian.* Well, you will have it so: your blood, rash boy,

Be on your own head! *you shall tarry here!*

[*They fight; and at first RALPH is grazed; but, after some furious passes, ADRIAN falls mortally wounded.*

*Adrian.* Ah! it is death!—*Ralph*—listen—nay, I faint!

*Ralph.* Why did you drive me to it? I repent!

*Adrian (faintly).* We are brothers—the Count Sigismund's—my father—(*dies*).

[*RALPH remains looking on him with silent horror: while a figure like*

*the Phantom of SIGISMUND appears on the upper stone stair, just within moonlight, by the yews.*

*Phantom of Sig. (speaks low).* I deemed there was no other world; no hell!

Is not this hell?

There stands my heart's own child,  
Stained with the life-blood of another son!  
His bloom of innocence, his morning dew  
Of joy already vanished! soiled by me!  
By me! whirled in the whirlwind of my crime!

Before this, guilty of a deadlier sin;  
A monster, born of my monstrosity!

Behold! my boy, for whose dear sake I died;  
For whom I would be damned for evermore!

But I am damned—and he is damned with me—

With me, and through me! all the sin is mine;

Mine! mine! my guilt is deeper than this hell!

Most despicable weakling in the world,  
Hourly I vowed to advance aloft, erect,  
Ruler of mine own spirit; and yet aye  
Grovelled in dust, mere vermin, a prone  
beast,

With wanton feet turned hourly from my goal,  
To dally in that hollow where the fiend  
Flaunts its phantasmal fair flesh-coloured  
flowers,

Luring the doomed with momentary sweet,  
Till all my veins, clear currents and fresh  
springs,

Curdled to coffin's food; and yet I breathed!  
Even as in life, in death I feel the curse

That weighs upon the creature; and with  
flame

Of doom more terrible, more swift—with  
blows

Thundering, thicker, surer—smites and blasts  
The fated roof-tree of one house forlorn,  
Leaving another prosperous awhile.

And yet I feel how in the abysmal Past

I was; in yon dim Future I shall be.

While I and my forefathers, and my seed—  
Yea, all the panorama of the world—

Are one Man, shadowed by one awful guilt,

One suffering, one freedom charged with doom  
 Unfathomable, more righteous than our right,  
 Than wisdom wiser, loving more than love.  
 All we name Nature sundereth evermore  
 From her All-Father; re-absorbed for ever,  
 Abideth reconciled; yet *ours* the sin,  
 That must be purged and punished ere the end.  
 But I rebel. I writhe impaled! Yea, curse,  
 Accuse thee, Heaven! Why visit upon *him*  
 The sins of his forefathers, and my own? . . .  
 I moan; I grope in blindness! Yet I know  
 The award for justice, and embrace my  
 pain! . . .

I hoped my son, the son of Innocence  
 (Who, while she folded her white wings on  
 earth

A moment, was called Constance), my sweet  
 child,

Nurtured in shrines of holiness and love,  
 Would soar in spirit from our earth to heaven,  
 Dwelling there in pure light above us all!  
 I may not even clasp thee in mine arms  
 For consolation; in me there is none!

Ill's instrument, I am unprofitable  
 For any good! Ah, could I speak one word  
 Of what my soul desires to him! I yearn  
 Over the child in vain! O Saviour, Christ!

RALPH (*mutters to himself*). Thou, father  
 —thou hast done this! Thou hast slain  
 My mother! Me thou plungest in the deep!  
 Behold the inheritance thou hast bequeathed!  
 Shall I curse thee for it?

*Phantom of Sig.* (*speaks audibly*). Ralph,  
 beloved, no!

[RALPH, turning with a shudder, sees  
 the Apparition, and stands petrified  
 for a moment; then flies over the  
 open space towards the castle. The  
 Figure, wringing its hands, dis-  
 appears.]

SCENE V.—*The Great Hall of the Castle, as  
 before: the same night.*

RALPH enters and paces it, with moonlight  
 streaming in at the oriel windows.

Ralph. What sound was that? Athwart  
 the distant pane

A wind-waved cedar brushed with shadowy  
 bough!

[*The Phantom of SIGISMUND appears  
 afar off by an oriel.*

What awful apparition haunts me? There,  
 Again I see the form! Or am I mad?  
 Behold, it slinks away more into shade! . . .

[*It vanishes.*

I shiver and grow cold! For shame, my  
 heart!

But there is nothing—'tis mere fantasy!  
 Surely no more! Ah! what an awful face!  
 Very like portraits of my dreaded father!  
 Father! art thou mine evil genius,  
 As thou wast hers? I have thy blood in me!  
 Some fascination draws me to ill dreams  
 Of thee and thy career! The truth looms  
 large

Through dim past time, in superstitious tale!  
 For all here talk with bated breath of thee,  
 Saying thou hauntest this old pile! How chill  
 Struck thy pale, vacant chambers on my  
 heart,

Visited by the taper's beam last night;  
 Chambers aflame once with fierce human fire!  
 Yea, and I thought I saw thy figure then! . . .  
 That horrible chapel of the orgies, too!  
 An evil influence steals from those fair forms,  
 The blasphemous brotherhood installed there,  
 Foul idols in the very sanctuary,  
 And faded roses of the revellers!  
 Am I predestined to a dark career,  
 Like thee? In sooth I am my father's son!  
 Why did they banish thee from home?

There were  
 Mitigations of thy guilt, as of mine own.—  
 How could I know this man?

He drove me to it!  
 I shudder, seeing him upon the sod,  
 Gasping and bleeding! I have slain a man—  
 That man, my brother! And the world will  
 know—

Disgrace upon my name! Deep shame and  
 sorrow

Upon my venerable friend's grey hairs! my  
 friend

Who reared me! Worse than all, upon my  
 love!

Death—death looks frightful! Yet to live  
 from hence  
 Seems harder; more insufferable still! . . .  
 Bertha, our dream is over! I, unworthy,  
 Dare not approach thee any more! And  
 thou  
 Wilt scorn me, and abhor! Until the deed  
 Of blood, which leaves me red with fratri-  
 cide,  
 Scarce I discerned the foulness of my crime,  
 That went before; for else this leprous hand  
 Should ne'er have soiled the purity of thine!  
 I knew I had done evil; but to-night  
 My past leaps to one red in the grim glare  
 Of this fierce slaughter: yea, I am accurst!  
 O Bertha, Bertha, never any more,  
 My darling, may we meet—sweet mother,  
 thou!  
 Yea, and my Annabel—ye are in heaven!  
 Ye are happy!—where's my father?—what  
 a face  
 Of woe was his!—some say my father loved  
 me!  
 May I not die now? die before they know? . . .  
 And what beyond?—ah! God forgive me!  
 Christ!  
 Thou who hast died to save, wilt Thou not  
 pardon? . . .  
 I feel the spirit of my mother nigh.  
*[He falls on his knees and prays.*  
*Rising—after a pause.*  
 But who can prove the deed?—a lonely  
 spot!—  
 It is but rarely any mortal passes.  
 And none may find the body—shall I hide it?  
 They deem me to the people's council gone,  
 Hours since—I go now—let me fall in battle!  
 The cause is noble: some atonement were  
 In such a death for evil I have wrought!  
 I must be doing: memories, avant!  
 Be banished, or I madden! the high cause  
 Of human welfare, a pure patriot zeal,  
 Live only in my soul!—and thou, my bride  
 That might have been! forget me! and be  
 happy! . . .  
 Ha! what a wail, as of a soul's despair,  
 From the old chapel yonder!—is it the  
 wind? . . .

[Exit.]

SCENE VI.—*Same night. The Castle of  
 Ravensburg. The old Gothic Chapel.  
 Scene of the blasphemous orgies of SIGIS-  
 MUND and his comrades. Moonlight  
 from the windows over the floor. Therein  
 stands the Phantom of SIGISMUND. The  
 forms of some voluptuous, and some gross,  
 white marble statues are dimly discern-  
 ible; also of monuments upon ancestral  
 tombs.*

*Phantom.* I will follow all unseen, not  
 terrify!  
 Alas! that I am only a terror to thee!  
 And when I yearn most over thee, thou seest!  
 Fain would I follow!—what will be the  
 end? . . .  
 Must I not always follow Ralph? My  
 darling! . . .  
 Ha! ye who swarmed about my best beloved,  
 Harrying him, leave me! for I will follow!  
 Yea, shield him from you! do I not loathe  
 your damned  
 Embraces? Peace! begone!—sometimes in  
 sooth  
 I am one white heat of soul-consuming lust . . .  
 Let me fly to the mountain! to the ice  
 Caverns, where erst I fell! or anywhere!  
 There is no peace, no rest, where'er I wander!  
 Why did I hope to find it in the grave?  
 Still do I haunt the mountains, and the sea,  
 Feeling some respite there—you whisper!  
 what?  
 That I was always fond of things like you?  
 Liars! ye were masked then! ye are leprosy—  
 Plague—putrefaction—Monsters! be gone!  
 Ha! women cease to twist smooth snake about  
 My limbs! to drag! to wag that horrible head,  
 Facing, upon the snake's neck! slowly! so!  
 Why I can wag mine! like a pendulum!  
 Dart at my brain! quick! finish! make an  
 end! . . .  
 What! blood again there crawling round my  
 feet?  
 Will it never cease to trickle from the  
 altar? . . .  
 And her white form thereon! . . . I did it  
 not! . . .

Who murdered her? I'll know it!—why, 'tis

Ralph!

Surely I wearied of you long ago—

Tho' ever ye returned to mouth me! now

My lusts are ashes, I can only loathe—

And yet ye cling, one ravening flame! how!

Constance!

Save me, my own! you are pitiful! O save!

Have I found thee, love, at last? I sought  
thee long!

How is it with thee? hast forgiven? speak!

Nay, let me see thy face! . . . Ah! foul,  
dead eyes!

Thou art not Constance, thou! the worst  
of all

These fiends! who art thou? . . . Blanche!

Ha! ha! I know thee!

Nay, let me follow him!—where is he  
gone?—

CURTAIN FALLS.

### PART III.—BERTHA

#### ACT V

SCENE I.—*On the borders of a meadow, at some distance from Ravensburg: far off a cataract descends from a mountain. Mountains around. Persons of Appenzell, Rhetia, the Engadine, &c., are mingled together. An assembly of shepherds in grey woollen garments, and jerkins of hide; with some hunters and a few small proprietors of higher standing than the serf-shepherds. They are standing and sitting on boulders, or felled trunks, under a forest of maples and sycamores, armed with scythes, clubs, slings, halberds, pikes, &c.*

CHIALDERER, the leader, is addressing the people, mounted on a boulder of rock. Two Sentinels on the outskirts of the gathering.

1st Sentinel. Who comes, in gorgeous armour and rich garb? A knight! a youth!

how fair—and deadly pale! [*Enter RALPH.*] Stand!—here you pass not! What would you, Sir Knight?

Ralph. I am your friend, the Count of Ravensburg.

2nd Sentinel (*whose name is HANS, a hunter*). The Count of Ravensburg! Welcome, Sir Count! I joy to see you—he is one with us. And old Sir Walter: you are a host, my lord!

Ralph. What? Hans, my boon companion! The mother—how hath she borne our cutting winds of late?

Hans. But poorly, Count: she's ill of her old age. The hawk is well now: 'tis a splendid bird—I tried him yesterday—no—let me see—three days—

Ralph. Nay, Hans, my friend, we'll talk of hawk's anon. Now bring me to your leader: times are grave.

Hans (*aside*). The boy has suddenly become a man! [*To RALPH.*] Surely, my lord: come, follow me: take care! There is the hole where your poor father's horse fell, when he—ah! but I forget myself—

Ralph. Let me not interrupt: I will wait here, until the leader finishes—unseen.

Chialderer (*to the people*). I have not told you half. I killed the horse that was turned loose into my corn. You know that; but do you know what I went through in prison for that? Thumbscrew, iron cap, famine, rats, no daylight, water on muddy dungeon floors till I rotted: and what for? Because I drove that —'s beasts out of my own grain! [*Cries of "Shame!"*] Peter, they dug up your old father out of the churchyard yonder, didn't they? to get at the good coat you buried him in—they hadn't enough gold-laced coats of their own above-ground; so, poor things! they had to burrow in the grave, like famished jackals or hyenas, and take the only coat the weeping orphans of a poor serf had found to wrap their father's corpse decently in—saying, forsooth, it was the Lord's by law!

Peter. So they did! St. Gall's curse upon

them! they shall pay for it. By St. Petronella, but they shall!

*Chial.* And that field was mine. I am no serf, though you who are are better men before God than the upright, two-legged thing that called itself Baron of Fardun! Isn't God your father, and Christ your brother? That isn't being of very vile family after all. But my father paid his feudal dues while they were due—and then this baron's father sold his rights to mine. He was a profligate, improvident beggar. But the son, who's worse, has never forgiven us for buying our independence. Well, I took the law into my own hands; for you know what their law is. I wanted justice, and couldn't afford to pay for it. Even if I could, why should I pay blackmail to those robbers for yielding me what is my own right before God? Justice, I suppose you have all of you found, is rather an expensive commodity here. It's the luxury of the rich, that is! [*Signs of assent.*] Well, the justice I got was queer—rather adulterated—like the coin. [*Applause.*] However, I came out of their trap alive; for here I am. Jane, my wife, poor woman, wasn't she glad to see me! She never thought she would again. Well, she and I, with our three children, were sitting quietly in the old place one night, not long after my release, eating our bouillon, when I hear a noise at the door, and call "Come in." To my astonishment in walks the devil himself, the Lord of Fardun! All but I get up, and salute the brute—Jane, because she is afraid of him; and she made the children do it. What do you think he did? Without saying a word, or returning their salute, he walks scowling up to the table between her and me, and spits into the soup we are eating. [*Shame! Shame!*] What did I do? Our bowl is large and deep. Have you seen a vulture swoop and truss a kid? Just like that I clutched his wrinkled old neck before and behind, and thrust his head into the scalding bowl—and "Drink, old devil," cried I, "the broth thou hast seasoned!" Oh, he bubbled, and spluttered,

and writhed! but I held his head under, and strangled him——

[*Shouts of "Right, right! Chialderer! we'll serve 'em all so!"*]

*An Old Man.* Alas, alas! it was a savage deed. Vengeance is mine, God says! What blood will flow because of this! What won't the cruel lords do to us? We are told to forgive! Hav'n't we suffered enough already? Do you want to make them destroy us altogether? Us and our women, and our little ones?

*Chial.* The good old father dotes. We mean to wring from these people, of whose tyranny we are weary, self-government, under our own mayors and magistrates, and by our own freely-elected diet. We will have no more of their bailiffs. On the chartered rights of many of you, for which your fathers bled, they have trampled; and we who have not those rights demand them—in the name of the Christian's God—in the name of humanity. We have despatched messengers to the free towns and free cantons: with them our hamlets and communes must make treaties of alliance, and enter into co-burghership. If the nobles choose to be free burghers of free republics, like us, well and good; if not, they shall be killed, or driven off as so much vermin. We will spin and weave, and tend flocks, and till the fields for these voracious wolves no longer. There will be no more tolls and taxes when we are free! [*Some voices protest, but the majority applaud.*] How about the Abbot's last trick? I have a neighbour, who makes the best Melilot green cheeses in Appenzell—or his good lady does. Now, not long since he went to market with his cart and oxen to sell his cheeses as usual. But, to his consternation, when he got down into the hollow, near the Bailiff's brand-new castle, he sees a new turnpike barring the road, and out pops a man in the Prince-Abbot's ugly livery, stops him, and demands toll on the cheeses. Neighbour has no warning of this last blackmail, and naturally enough can't pay. So the exciseman, he just whistles shrilly, and

a huge dog, with a mane like a lion, leaps on the poor fellow, and nearly tears him to pieces. He had to go back, too, as he hadn't money to pay the toll with, and never sold his cheeses. He's ill in bed now, and on a fair way to ruin. For milk and butter it is all the same. This is what we are coming to! Why, these fellows hold their fiefs under the Duke, on condition of keeping his high-roads open to travellers and merchants, and the way they do it is by turning themselves into bandits, or taking bribes from them, and sharing in their plunder. Nay, there is not a baron on Rhine or Danube but stops and robs the merchants like a common footpad; and if they can't or won't pay, thrusts them into filthy, deadly dungeons, torturing them to extract ransom. So they kill commerce and frighten merchants away. So they keep us poor, and prevent us exchanging our produce with the produce of other lands, or exchanging ideas with foreigners from distant parts of the world. So they hinder us from growing wise about our own interest. So it is that we remain miserable, ignorant slaves of these men, who insist on our squandering our best blood in their petty squabbles, and give us nothing in return! How long shall this be? And there's far worse behind. Look at the noble freedmen of Uri, Schwytz, and Unterwalden! Who made them free? They groaned under a tyranny heavy as ours; but only for a little while. How long did they endure it? Shame on you that ye have endured it so long! What did Tell to Gessler? Baumgartner to Wolfenschiess? and, nearer home, but a year ago, what did Adam in Engadine to the Lord of Gardovall? Adam brought the lord his fair daughter as he desired—but another present he brought too—one a little less desirable—a knife for his entrails, and fire for the illumination of his den! [*Cries of "Well done! well done!"*] Similarly have I done to Fardun! [*Shouts of applause.*] You expect your messengers back hourly from the free states. You have asked for help, and you will want it; for the

Abbot has got Duke Frederick to promise him troops to put us down with. But you will fight for home and fatherland, as they did at Morgarten and Sempach: let this be our Grütli: with the sons of Stauffacher and Melchthal you will form a free league. The mountains are our ramparts. What! they call these rocks and peaks theirs? Rather these alps belong to the wild game, whose welfare the lords respect more than ours! Their property! Do yonder Lauwinen make obeisance, and wait till the lords pass before they move? Nay, let me put one of these upon any of yonder ice precipices and giddy pinnacles, where you and I, in spite of them, hunt the steinbock and the gems! How will the heights and deeps salute him? By swimming in a witch's sabbath-walse around him, and dashing him to atoms on the stones below! There let our eagles and vultures pay him court, and pay him tribute—or let *him* pay tribute of his own dead eyes, and bloody heart, to *them*! Nay, you, and the bears, and the lynxes are lords of the land!

[*The people shout applause, and many rush to shake hands with the orator. One of the peasants then approaches and speaks in low tones to CHIALDERER.*]

*Chial.* My friends, they say there is a great lord in our midst, who wants to join us. But I advise you to have nothing to do with any of these folk. They are all the same. The fox wants to ally himself with the fowls, and will help them to fight the other foxes. A fig for such alliances! No! tell this lord to go back!—Nay, rather detain him! As for the castles of this vermin, we'll burn them all! We'll make these wasps' nests rather close for them with a little smoke!—Arrest this knight, and bring him here! [*Applause.*]

[*RALPH comes forward surrounded. Hans the hunter (mounts on a boulder, and says aloud).*]

Friends, I know the young Count of Ravensburg, as I know myself, and will answer for his loyalty to your cause with my life. I

hold my land under him. Though he has not been in our country long, he has hunted with many of us; he has encouraged us to hunt, and granted us all the privileges of freedmen. His father, too, whatever his sins, was our friend—

*Chial.* Nay, he was a monster of iniquity, and no friend to us in his later years!

*Hans.* This young lord has been with us in our merrymakings, and social gatherings. He has a free hand, a kindly, cheerful tongue, and a generous, open heart. He will be faithful to death if he swears it. And think of what high value he can be to our cause—he with his friends, his connections, his name, and his stronghold upon the rock! Let us, while we stick up for our own rights, be just to others, and respect their claims. Let us move with the nobles, if they will be our friends. So shall we be four times stronger. Even the sovereign Abbot's rights should be respected. No vengeance; no fury; but righteousness and temperate dealing.

[*Cries of "Long live the Count of Ravensburg."*]

*Ralph (speaks from the same place).* My dear friends and good brothers!

[*Cries of "Hear him!" "Well spoken!" "He calls us brothers!"*]

*An Old Man.* What are they shouting for?

*Peter (a serf).* He called us all brothers! He's a handsome fellow and good. I know about him.

*The Old Man.* I believe he is good, neighbour; still it doesn't cost a lord much to call us serfs "brothers." I've heard something like that before, I have, and not very much has come of it. New masters are not always better than old. Maybe he feels it all in a general way like, you know, at the time when he's speaking; or maybe he doesn't. But he don't no how always like us serfs to talk to him as if we *was* his own born brothers—nor he don't always feel in his own self as if we was, I'm thinking. Besides, I've heard tell as how brothers don't always love each other very much! There's Cain and Abel, for instance. Still, neighbour,

it's a fine thing to have a lord on your side—so you're right to show him how pleased you are with him for calling you brothers, and for coming to take your part; or he might go away in a huff, he might, if you didn't. Bless you—I know them! I know them!

[*Chuckling.*]

*Peter (laughing).* Well, you're a wise man, father Paul! Still he's a fine young chap, I say—and us can't do without the like o' he.

*Ralph.* What I ask for myself is that you will allow me to fight with you—as your equal, not as the feudal superior of any; and, till the day of battle comes, which must be soon, let me stay among you, and share your lot in all things! [*Cries of "You shall! You shall!"* *Whereupon RALPH strips himself of his armour and rich dress, and having whispered to HANS, the latter brings him a grey shepherd's tunic, which he puts on.*] I must ask some of my friends here to make my get-up rather less like a jester's motley than it is at present. [*Laughter.*] With most of what your leader, Master Chialderer, said, I profoundly sympathise in my inmost soul. You of St. Gall and Appenzell, your fair, just demands for redress have been rejected by the Abbot, and the imperial cities, his allies. And as to you, men of the mountains, who have won no chartered rights hitherto, you must win them with your own strong arms, and with the help of those freemen whose aid you have invoked. I do not wonder, for the rest, at your leader distrusting me, after all the injury you and himself have suffered at the hands of my order. Yet, believe me, there are good men and true among us, who have your interest at heart. Many of you know that to be so [*applause*], and our interests are identical. The Dukes of Austria have robbed my fathers of their principality—while their underlings have robbed you. Let us all join in delivering our common fatherland from the oppressive sway of foreign bailiffs, and from iniquitous native governments; but let us be just ourselves, also, and merciful; so the God of Justice and Mercy shall give us victory.

Your freedom dawns, like yonder sun, whose  
first beams now illumine the high peaks and  
the cataracts.

*[He points to the mountains, with the  
light of sunrise upon them.]*

SCENE II.—*The Lower Wooded Hills.*

HANS the hunter, and RALPH, descending  
rapidly, both in plain hunting costume,  
with bows and arrows, and axes; gems  
and other game slung over their shoulders.

*Hans (jodling—then he sings):*

The hunter sings, as he strides along :

Halloo !

The paths are perilous and long ;

But a hunter's heart is light and strong :

He jodles, and the ice crags jodle too :

Halloo ! halloo !

Hark to the clang of his iron heel !

Halloo !

He grapples granite with grip of steel ;

The mountains echo to his merry peal ;

He splinters, and he mounts the ice wall blue :

Halloo ! halloo !

Who spies a gems from the top of a bluff ?

Halloo !

A shaft hath tumbled him sure enough ;

Though hunter's fare be scant and rough,

He quaffs for wine the air, the stream, the dew :

Halloo ! halloo !

His seasoned frame is hard as a rock :

Halloo !

He doth indomitable mock

Lauwine, red lightning, rolling block ;

He springeth over icy chasms blue :

Halloo ! halloo !

He lies out under a cave by night :

Halloo !

He communeth with still starlight,

And snow-peaks in their shrouds of white :

In far ravines hoar torrents roaring go :

Halloo ! halloo !

The hunter peers from a stony jag :

Halloo !

A Lammergeyer unfurls the flag

Of vans, that shadow all the crag !

He shouts ! death hovers ! hurls him down below !

Halloo ! halloo !

And as he falls, falls in the deep :

Halloo !

With him the rocks rebounding leap ;

Rouse all the demons out of their sleep,

Who laugh, as he lies cold in snow :

Halloo ! halloo !

*Ralph.* How bright these Alpine-roses !  
bilberries

May quench our thirst ! there is no water  
here.

Blue gentians ! what an aromatic air

Was wafted then ! there opens a fair view

Of snow peak and blue gorge, between the  
pines.

*Hans.* My lord, that was a rare leap  
which you made ; and yet it savoured of the  
desperate ! You did not join us in our late  
carouse at Father Werner's, on St. Catherine's  
day, before the herds went to their summer  
Alp ? though you were there, they said, but  
fast asleep ! You are grown graver, sadder,  
than of old, and seem more saintly now than  
good Sir Walter ! I saw that pretty wench  
make desperate love to you ! and you were  
Anthony, or Joseph—I am not sure if it was  
ever so ! And we have drained heel-taps  
ere now together !

*Ralph.* Dear Hans, you know not, and I  
may not tell

What changed me thus : I feel that I am  
lost :

Alas ! I scarcely may endure to live :

Life is all gloom now—though I strive to  
clasp

Our common hope of mercy on the Cross.

Our people's cause—'tis Christ's—I make it  
mine—

For that I breathe ; and I would see the day  
Of their high triumph ! Tell and Winkelried,  
Fürst, Melchthal, these illustrious names have  
power

To thrill my soul : Chialderer moved me much  
That memorable night I came to you.  
A strange, strong man ; a dark and dreadful  
man :

Ferocious, and yet cast in hero-mould.  
Ah! some delicious glow  
Pervades my frame among these crags of ours,  
Leaping or climbing ; hewing in steep ice  
Footholds : yea, pleasant seems the perilous  
chase ;

For then I cannot think—our mountain air  
Exhilarates more than wine ; but Horror  
haunts,

A grisly spectre, a chill mist, miasma,  
All of my inmost being when I rest—  
Ah! you would loathe me, snatch your honest  
hand

Away from mine, it may be, if you knew—  
Yet do not take for gospel all I say—  
Hans, we must fix our hearts above : the  
world

Passeth away! *you* need to be forgiven!  
All need forgiveness,—only not as I!

*Hans.* You are not well, sir : nay, you are  
not well! I see it : so you magnify your  
sin. We are all mortal ; but confession's  
power is wonderful. Ah! you believe it not.  
You are a Hussite, or an Albigense. They  
are good men, for all the priest may say.  
For me, I am honest, try to do my best—  
we can't do more. Mary is merciful! I too  
shall hail the dawn of better days. The  
prospect of a brush with Cuno's men—his  
hireling cut-throats—with the foreigner,  
refreshes me! we'll ruffle their gay feathers!  
And yet I wonder if there will be all the  
benefit they promise us in change. There  
must be taxes : that was a bit of humbug of  
Chialderer's, saying there would be none.  
Only we may hope to get our money's  
worth. But then we shall have to make  
our own laws. For my part, I own I shan't  
know how to make them. I've other things  
to think of. There wouldn't be much harm  
in leaving that business to those who have  
more leisure, and more training perhaps!

*Ralph (smiling).* Doubt not the benefit of  
change! yet I

Fear violence of exasperated men,  
Like your Romansch Chialderer, and his  
friends.

Be it ours to moderate the lava-flow  
Of their fierce, all-annihilating wrath!  
Alas! there must be misery and blood!  
God grant we scourge the enemy from our  
homes,

Ere he can wreak his hate on what we love.  
*Hans.* Amen! my lord ; we will do it,  
never fear!

[*A pause.*

Well, we made noise enough that night, I  
know.

You did not sleep much!

*Ralph.* At good Father Werner's  
The porridge and the milk are excellent ;  
But his hay-beds are all alive ; his goats  
By night climb up the pent-roof, and throw  
down

Big stones : this rouses every grunting pig!  
Past midnight, some of you (not quite dead  
drunk,

Under the deal, or staggering out of doors)  
I heard discuss the bell-cow of the year ;  
Her brand-new bell, her bunch of frontal  
flowers ;

Then there was martial talk ; and, lastly, one  
Told of a heifer, lost on a precipice ;  
Alive, though fallen, yet inaccessible.  
He strove, in vain, to fix the very spot ;  
None got it clear, and so he grew enraged.  
The strange name of some mountain kept  
recurring

In his thick guttural utterance, until  
Vaguely I heard the name, and only that,  
While dozing ; then ill dreams thronged  
round the name ;

A weird, wild word! What was it? I  
forgot!

Not Tödi—no ; nor Glärnitch ; nor Cal-  
anda—

*Hans.* Well I remember ; so you know  
the whole! . . . Aha! our cave above the  
Firn was cold! only we made a royal fire ;  
and I at least slept soundly : how the  
marmots whistled! . . . Talking of mar-  
mots, none can dress them, sir, except the

late cook of Lord Wenceslas! (You know I was at Wolfsberg when a boy.) Still I remember how he did them—Hist! a lynx, sir!

*Ralph.* Where?

*Hans.* In yonder bough! A shot! a splendid shot! he glares with balls of fire. They never move when once they are surprised. Only don't miss him! or he will not miss his lightning spring at you. [*RALPH lets fly an arrow.*] You've tumbled him. A beast full grown. See what a splendid fur! [*They examine and take up the lynx.*] The bear was killed not very far from here. They tell strange tales of Wolfsberg, whose bad lord died strangely. Lady Blanche would never allow any attendant near him; gave him all the drugs prescribed with her own hand, they say—And what's become of young Lord Adrian, that limb of Satan, no one knows; he last was seen the day before your grand mask ball—Pardon; I rattle on: I weary you! You are faint? Some spirit in my flask remains.

*Ralph (drinks).* Thanks, my good friend: I would be silent now. [*They descend the mountain and exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*In a Mountain Pass of the same country.*

*Cavalry, coroneted and plumed Knights in armour, with banners, escutcheons, and pennons, are advancing: some divisions of the AUSTRIAN, and PRINCE-ABBOT of St. Gall's infantry following.*

*The Commander of the Austrian Contingent (to a Squire riding by him).* I would we were well out of this defile! Bid all the mounted knights spur on as fast as this rough, rising, Satan's ground allows! The summit's near—so may the swineherds be! I mean to fight on yonder flats; for there the day is ours. [*To a Knight.*] My beast, that never trips, has stumbled twice on these accursed rocks, and all this rain makes most infernal mire. These horrible

ways are not for mailed men, or horses. See, I pray you, the hind foot, the off one! I will wager he hath a stone. What's that?—some swift missile went whizzing by! We are attacked! on, gentlemen! prick on!

[*Soldiers of the free states, allied with Appenzell, burst out of the woods, shouting, and fall furiously on the flanks of the cavalry; while peasants of Appenzell and the Grisons appear in front under CHIALDERER, blocking the track, armed with slings, pikes, clubs, halberds, &c.*]

*Com.* We can't manœuvre here. We cannot turn—and shall not reach the summit: we will fight in that great plain below: sound a retreat!

[*Trumpets sound for a retreat. At the cries of "Back! back!" the infantry are seized with panic. Many knights and horses, in attempting to turn, roll over one another, wounded or slain; some, dismounted, fight hand to hand with the enemy, who attack before and in flank. All is tumult and confusion. The flying cavalry rush back through the flying ranks of their own infantry.*]

*Chial.* (wielding his huge axe, deals death, shouting). Die, dogs of nobles! roll and bite the dust!

Kill every one!—why, this will spoil your clothes,

And your iron coward's coats, ye peacocks! die!

So we may eat from swine troughs, may we? that's

Your sentence! Pass to hell! thank God for this!

With glorious glow of battle, and spilt blood Of foes—with satiate revenge I tingle!

[*To a Cavalier on the ground, wounded, who calls for "Mercy!"*]

*Mercy!* what mercy have you shown to us?

Ah! would you turn your beasts into our corn?

Imprison, torture, madden, spit upon us!

Then whine for mercy to Chialderer !  
 Tyrant ! God blasts thee, cleaves thee, by  
 mine arm !  
 I would thou wert all kings and knights in  
 one !

*[He cleaves through visor, head, and  
 helm, with one blow of his huge  
 forest axe.]*

Ha ! how the hot blood spurts into my face !  
 These are the roses that we bathe us in,  
 Refreshed, we peasants ! on ! pursue ! no  
 quarter ! down with them !

The ground is slippery with blood and rain !  
 My poor parched fatherland would quaff it  
 pure,

This blood of tyrants ! undiluted ! yea !  
 That is the vintage she was panting for !

SCENE IV.—*Another division of the enemy's  
 army (AUSTRIANS, ABBOT'S, BLANCHE  
 of Wolfsberg's, and other troops). The  
 Knights have dismounted and are ascend-  
 ing the steep hill, on short, wet, slippery  
 grass. RALPH is commanding a second  
 body of the peasant forces, who are con-  
 cealed among high rocks and trees, im-  
 mediately above the hill ; he is without  
 armour, dressed like a shepherd, and  
 barefoot as the rest—with only an eagle's  
 feather in his cap, to distinguish him as  
 leader.*

*Ralph.* Hurl down that rock ! all lend a  
 hand ; 'tis fast !

So ! now it moves ! it heaves ! there ! over  
 with it !

Let's watch ! They hear and see — they  
 scuttle ! look !

Three fellows slider over to the gulf !

Ah, how it bounds ! Our friends have  
 rolled another.

'Tis on them ! Five or six at least are  
 crushed !

Now for the trunks of mighty growth we  
 felled !

Swift as an avalanche they will descend !

Swift as the giant poles that rush to Rhine

Down yon steep forest slides, worn smooth,  
 like glass.

*[A multitude of men shove these trunks  
 one after another down the steep  
 slope.]*

No catapult can hurl them swifter ! See !

Not the uproarious new-fangled cannon :

Men scuttle off like frightened rabbits !

Twelve

Are overset—mere skittles ! Others, mashed  
 Like gnats, lie flattened underneath yon  
 rock !

Now, my brave brothers ! onward ! follow  
 me !

Hampered with ponderous arms and coats of  
 proof,

Their soles are ice upon the slippery,  
 Short, slant, wet turf ! And, lo ! their cross-  
 bow gut,

Slackened with rain, the iron bolts drop  
 dead !

God fights upon our side !

Let fly ! their leader falls ! Our naked  
 feet

Will better bite the ground. We are at  
 home !

Form ranks ! Now charge !

*[They advance, shouting, "The Grey  
 League !" "Appenzell !" "Father-  
 land !" "Freedom !" "Death to  
 Austria !" A furious hand-to-  
 hand combat follows, with sword,  
 pike, club, and halberds. At last, the  
 Austrians and their allies, catching  
 sight of another division of peasants,  
 who appear on a height in their  
 rear, and who are really women of  
 Appenzell disguised, call out that  
 their retreat is cut off, and turn to  
 fly in confusion.]*

*[Exeunt RALPH and all in pursuit.]*

SCENE V.—*Ralph, in his eagerness, gets  
 separated from his friends. He is much  
 wounded ; but a body of Wolfsberg troops,  
 who have surrounded him, seeing the  
 plume in his cap, and knowing him for*

*leader of the peasants, summon him to surrender. After desperate fighting, he is taken prisoner.*

*Enter LADY BLANCHE of Wolfsberg, on horseback, livid with rage and disordered.*

*Lady Blanche.* Ha ! there's young Ravensburg ! . . . Relenting saints !

I praise you, who have flung me sweet revenge,

To roll between the palate and the tongue,  
A dainty morsel ! Am I then defeated ?

Nay ! for I crush the viper brood beneath  
Mine iron heel—under my dungeon stone ! . . .

*[To her soldiers.]*

Chain him in that dark dungeon you well know !

The lowest and the deepest ; where she stands,

Mine Iron Maiden, who hath such a smile,  
And such soft arms, and most voluptuous breast !

I had her features copied from mine own ;  
So I am sure they must be beautiful !

Will she do as well as Bertha, fair Sir Knight ?  
*[Exeunt troops with RALPH, a prisoner.]*

*Blanche (sol.).* He shall to Wolfsberg.  
Will it long be mine ?

These beasts will burn it ! Austria defeated !  
Have not I served her ? I will fly to  
Frederick !

Nay, to the Emperor ! The Duke's in trouble.  
But Emperor Sigismund, he received me well—

Yea, more than graciously. His wife is dead—

And all the priesthood take me for a saint  
At Presburg ! Well, I *am* a dutiful  
Daughter of Holy Church. I won largesse  
Of praise there between Church and lazarus-house.

I have done many deeds of charity ;  
And this shall cover a multitude of sins.  
The unrighteous mammon makes me many friends !

Full absolution shall be mine. I know  
My life for evil. Yet old Wenceslas  
Was a mere devil from the pit ; and I

Only do justice on this murdering boy ! . . .  
Who is a rebel in arms, moreover, now ! . . .  
Twice, Sigismund, hast dared to baffle me !  
Once in thy proper person ; now again  
By this thy cub—that ugly woman's child.  
Mine should have ruled o'er Rheinthal ; but  
this boy

Hath slain my son—*his brother—his own brother !*

Adrian should have married Bertha's wealth ;  
Now Ralph leads on these serfs to victory,  
Robbing us of our all ! so *he* may reign  
Sovereign here. Sigismund's son ! *her* son—  
That whey-faced woman's, whom I hate—  
yea, slew—

By hatred only ; not by knife or poison.

The fool ! Ah, Sigismund, I loathe thee,  
man !

But dost thou triumph ? Thee, methinks, I  
slew,

Weak palterer, and thou hast gone to hell !

That's sure ! Thou, God's most blasphemous  
enemy !

Now thy beloved offspring will I slay !

*He* reign o'er Rheinthal ! Let Chialderer  
reign !

Or any reeking peasant ! Never he !

*[Exit.]*

#### SCENE VI.—*The Castle of Ravensburg.*

*SIR WALTER in his private chamber, on a high-backed oaken chair, with a letter in his hand.*

*Sir Walter (sol.).* I might have known the  
son of Sigismund  
Would never serve the Lord ! Have I not  
loved

The boy for his own, for his dear mother's  
sake,

Long wrestling on my knees for him in prayer,  
Sure that he would fulfil our soul's desire ? . . .  
This hateful wicked woman dares appeal  
Unto my rumoured reverence for the cause  
Of public justice, weighing down less claims  
Of private honour, and home ties—so Vice

Stamps her base metal with fair Virtue's face!—

She prays I will denounce him, and deliver,  
As slayer of her son, Lord Adrian.

She says she cannot prove the deed; while I  
Avowed to her I knew the criminal.

Yea, I know more! I know the motive  
now! . . .

I must—I will denounce him; though 'tis she  
Who asks me! Ah! Ralph, child whom I  
have loved

As mine own son—since Edgar died no other  
Remains to me! and thou art proved a limb  
Of evil—a low lecher, a deceiver,  
A murderer, a fratricide! what more? I know  
not!

He may be very foulest of the foul!  
Constance's child!—in mercy was she taken  
Before this hour!

I feel now that I sinned,  
Concealing from the world the father's sin.  
I held the proofs. He should have been  
degraded  
From his high state, or died a felon's death!  
Ralph would have lost his lofty place; but  
warned

By the sire's fate, might still be innocent.  
I covered up the plague-spot: unremoved  
It hath infected all the ambient air!  
Was it for me to deal more tenderly  
With sin than doth the God who hateth it?  
And punished by the chosen race of old  
With what to mortal weakness may appear  
Inhuman wrath? Did holy Abraham  
Withhold his own dear Isaac from the Lord,  
When God demanded bloody offering  
Of his white life, though in him lived the  
Christ?

His innocent Isaac!—mine's not innocent!  
Saul was cast down for sparing Amalek.  
And what did God to Eli, the high priest,  
When he abetted filial sacrilege?  
Then all these worldly mummeries I allowed  
From dotard fondness! I am punished  
now . . .

Yea, though the wretch may cost my very life,  
I must pluck out this eyesight I so love!—  
So may his soul, my God, be saved for ever!

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir Knight, the Lady Bertha craves  
a word.

*Sir W.* Ha! Lady Bertha!—the poor  
child!

[*A pause.*

I am

Immersed in very grave affairs; I grieve,  
Inform her; but I cannot see her now!

[*Servant exit, and re-enters.*

*Ser.* Sir Knight, the Lady Bertha followed  
me—

She would not be denied—she is at hand.

*Enter BERTHA, pale and breathless.*

*Bertha.* I crave your pardon, sir, but I  
have news!

There have been two great battles, and in  
both

The people are victorious! yet, Ralph,  
Who led them on to victory, pursued  
Too far—he fought most wonderfully, sir!  
Was everywhere; a very lion—alas!

*He is prisoner*—a prisoner to one  
Who hates us all—the old witch, Lady  
Blanche!

What will she do to him? he will be killed!  
Or linger horribly in some deep den,  
Till death in pity creeps to his relief.  
Since victory favours, do you hasten, sir!  
With all the Ravensburg retainers, now  
At once, to Wolfsberg! you may rescue him!  
The castle will be safe: no need of men  
To guard it! for we fear, although the people  
Are eager to release him, that Chialderer,  
His second in command, defers their march,  
Half-hearted: we surmise him a false friend.

*Sir W. (slowly).* I do rejoice that he hath  
fought so well—

Upon the Lord's, the people's side,—they win!  
Now Heaven be praised for this! All is not  
night

On this our earth! His kingdom cometh! yea,  
I will rejoice: and we must learn to live  
In His grand purposes towards the Church,  
And races whom it pleased Him to elect;  
Not in our puny private hopes and fears;  
Our disappointments and desires! [*A pause.*

For Ralph,  
If it be Heaven's will, he shall be wrung  
Out of that woman's cruel grasp—but hearken!  
Dear Lady Bertha!—this may be the hand  
Of righteous Heaven, not hers :—nay, nerve  
yourself,  
My daughter ! I, who love you, have to  
wound !

Yea, strong and stern must be my utterance !  
Ralph is no mate for you : ye may not marry !  
*Bertha.* How, sir, not marry Ralph, my  
soul's betrothed !

*Sir W.* Bertha, I dare not speak the naked  
truth ;

But Ralph has perpetrated crimes that bar  
Your fates from one another evermore !  
He is not worthy of you ; he hath slain  
His very brother, here, at night, behind  
The castle !—On that evil night of mask,  
Dear maiden, Baron Adrian was seen  
A murdered corpse—his murderer stood o'er  
him.

I saw it ! I ! Ralph feared he would disclose  
A damning secret ; and the son of Blanche  
Was son of Ralph's own father. Sigismund !—  
To a pure virgin more may not be told—  
I grieve to wound ; but you must tear from now  
Your lover from your heart ! the sacrifice  
'Tis God demands ; and God will strengthen  
you ! . . .

For Ralph, I shall denounce him to the  
State !—

Not now to Austria—nor Emperor—  
But to the council of his countrymen,  
Free men assembling under their own skies,  
Upon their native soil—it may be these  
Will be more merciful in judging him !

*Bertha (who at first has seemed about to  
swoon, but with a great effort has nerved  
herself, and listened).*

No, sir, you would not do it—if we save him—  
If he still live, you will not crush him—you !

*Sir W.* Hast thou well weighed full im-  
port of my speech ?

*Bertha.* Yea, but there must be error—he  
himself

Hath not been heard. I know that he is good !  
Or if he sinned, there may be a strong cause,

Unknown to us ! God, seeing it, forgives !  
Surely he slew that evil man in fair  
Fight ! he was goaded to it ! stood at bay,  
Driven to a precipice's edge ! I dimly see  
From all you tell me—and he hath repented !  
He suffereth healing anguish of remorse.  
I comprehend now what one told, how  
strangely

He bore himself among the peasants yonder,  
Over far hills—how sad, how grave he  
seemed ;

Referring darkly to some awful sin :  
They feared he would go mad—if we but save,  
I feel he will repent ! and in our love—  
Doth he not love me ? he will yet be all  
A knight should be !

Ponder his noble traits !  
Do I not know them ? and yourself, you  
know them !

Yea, all the people of our fatherland !  
Is he not now their saviour ? Hath not he  
Borne himself like a hero in the war ?

*Sir W.* Alas ! alas ! I deemed I knew his  
worth.

I have done my feeble best for him : he hath  
Proved himself traitor—ingrate—lady, never  
Can he be mate for you ! you must renounce  
him !

And I must do my duty to the State—  
And to my God—no more !

Yet hearken—I  
Will straightway summon all the vassals : still  
We may already be too late—unless  
Chialderer hath advanced to Wolfsberg—

*Bertha.* Nay,  
I know he hath not ! though the soldiers chide,  
He leads them to a distant fortress first.  
And let me think—they said that Ralph was  
wounded.

Oh, he will die ! Jesus ! what shall I do ? . . .  
Stay ! there's a man knows Wolfsberg ! he  
hath often

Told me, I now remember, of the wolf's  
Grim lair, and all its guilty secrets—should  
The witch immure him in that loathsome hole,  
Where stands the grinning iron fiend ! she may !  
Farewell, sir, not a moment is to lose !

[*Half goes, but returns.*

Yet on my knees I pray you to relent !  
If my poor love be living—let him live !  
*Sir W.* Rise, Bertha ! kneel not ! only  
kneel to God !

*Bertha (weeping).* Nay, sir, oh, never ! till  
you grant my prayer ! . . .

If you denounce him, ponder what the world  
Will say ! that you want to rob him of his  
own !

*Sir W.* Lady ! how dare you hint it ? when  
have I

Shrunk from God's side, lest shameless  
calumny

Should shoot her lip at me, or point the  
finger !

You do but temper my right purpose, girl !

Let reprobates hiss after their own kind !

How ! never shall you marry such a man !

Bertha, you know not what his father was. . . .

And how his mother loved—and how he slew  
her—

Slew her ! nay, tortured, maddened, ere he slew.

These men will not repent—they cannot ! for

It is the Lord Himself who hardens them. . . .

I am your mother's friend : and she was hers  
Who died, his mother's : you must tell her all !

*Bertha.* I will ! I promise !—only promise,  
you !

Think what he hath endured ! he suffers now,  
Who knows what awful pangs ! is it not  
enough ?

Oh, dear Sir Walter ! whom he loves, and I  
Love as a father, for our sakes, and hers,

Who died, his mother's, hide the shame ! for he  
Is young yet ! and I feel he will repent !

He is not hardened, as his father was—

Give him not over to destruction, sir !

The child you cherished—ponder all he is—

And all he may be—he will honour yet

You, and the old name, and the glorious cause

You have at heart, the cause of our pure faith,

And freedom—Ah ! what boots it ? he is  
dying,

There, while I linger !—for your heart is hard !

You are not all we dreamed ! you will rejoice

In Ralph's disgraceful doom ! . . . Oh, piti-  
less ! . . .

If he repent not, then denounce him ! give

Him trial-time for proof of penitence !

Else he may perish unprepared ! . . . God  
deal

With you, sir, as you deal with our poor boy !

[*She covers sobbing at his feet.*]

*Sir W. (in a broken voice).* Girl, you have  
conquered !

Lord ! may such a love

And power of goodness save him even yet

For thee, and for his people ; for us all ! . . .

Only begone ! . . . Nay, what can you accom-  
plish

For his release ? ourselves will arm ! What, ho !

Myself, howe'er infirm, will forth ! You rouse

Terrible fear in me concerning him !

*Bertha (almost kissing his mantle, hysteri-  
cally).* I thank you, sir ! the Lord shower

blessing on you ! . . .

Do as you say : I know what I will do.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE VII.—*The Castle of Wolfsberg : a  
dim-lit dungeon, with lamp swinging  
from the low vaulting on one side. The  
Iron Virgin, an instrument of torture  
and death, stands in the midst.*

*Ralph (sol., wounded, weak, and in fever).*

My friends will march to rescue me ! too  
late ! . . .

Ah ! life is sweet, for all its bitterness !

I would not die yet ! I am but a boy !

Bertha, my heart ! no life for us, no love !

For thee I trust, I deem, there may be  
joy . . .

If I am saved, in heaven we may meet.

Perchance she loves me still : she loves me  
still !

Then will she grieve—how if she knows my  
sin ?

I have no friend ! why should I care to live ?

If only Christ will pity, let me die !

Bertha, be happy ! . . .

We have won the day.

Our fatherland is free ! and I have fought

For her salvation ! Did I not resolve

To yield my very life for her ?—and now

Shall I hang back a coward?

We have fought

A glorious fight : I tingle with it yet !

Fierce ecstasy of shocks and blows ! loud roar

Of battle ! clash of arms and trumpet-blare !

Rich gleam of rainbow armour ! and bright  
banners

Tossed on wild surges of ensanguined strife,

Now rampant, buoyant ! now low sinking,  
loosely

Trailed in death's hand ! now desperately  
snatched

By life from death ! brave army of plumed  
knights !

Grapple of mortal madness ! all unstaunched

Red wounds, unfelt ! fierce curses ! blood  
that boils !

We fight, a handful of us, with a host !

Innumerable veterans, equipped

By Mars, yea, marshalled by the God of  
War ! . . .

Will not the people love me, whatsoe'er

They hear ? And Bertha ! I am sure that she

Will love me ! Even Sir Walter ! whatsoe'er

They know of mine ill deeds ; and I may be  
Forgiven—up yonder, too !—not lost for  
ever ! . . .

But ah ! *the torture* ! how to bear it ! how ? . . .

Seven iron-clamped doors reverberating close,

Tolling sevenfold low thunder of deep doom

Through these dim hollows of a sevenfold  
tomb ! . . .

"*These are to stifle screams,*" the warder  
croaked.

After those tortuous rock-galleries,

The slimy vault, the dungeon where she stands,

This iron Idol, with sinister smile,

Huge image of her mother-mistress, Blanche !

There hung a blear-eyed flame, which with  
foul gloom

Engendered fearful twilight : slowly She

Unclosed her hollow bosom ; and displayed  
Grim spikes, red rusted with men's blood !

beneath

Her feet there gleamed some water, where  
obscene

Live things I heard : they scuffled, revelling

In human ruin ! . . . "*There, to-morrow, you*

*Will tumble from the Iron Maid's embrace !"*

Croaked the hunched warder : "*Will you  
not confess ?*"

All the scene passes, and repasses now,

In horrible procession, through my brain ! . . .

Yet I would put it from me—I am weak

From loss of blood, pain, fever, and no  
food ! . . .

Have I no sword ? no knife ? to make an end

Before to-morrow ? . . .

Nay, to-morrow's here !

Look ! how She, towering, smiles ! She  
opens ! now !

I feel the spikes ! heart ! eyes ! and brain !

[*The Phantom of SIGISMUND appears  
near him.*

My father !

*Phantom.* I am a rebel still ! I curse !  
accuse thee,

Unrighteous Heaven ! an evil demon rules !

And tortures my poor child !—I see you,  
fiends !

I see you bending over him !—what do ye ?

Your hideous features lit up with his  
torment !

My hands are bound ! mine arms are  
paralysed !

I am impotent to rend you ! . . . I want to  
die ! . . .

I cannot die ! ah, me ! I am immortal !

*Ralph.* Oh, father ! . . . was it kind to  
bring me here ? . . .

*Thou, father ! thou hast put me into hell !*

[*Phantom vanishes.*

Is there no help ? my mother ! Bertha ! none ?

Save me, O Lord ! . . .

I hear a voice : they are coming : it must be !

I am Ralph of Ravensburg ; a knight ; a  
noble !

They shall not see me tremble : I am firm :

I will endure whatever they may do.

God ! Thou wilt strengthen me ! . . . they  
come . . .

*Enter BERTHA through a secret passage and  
doorway in one of the walls.*

How ! Bertha !

Art thou a blessed saint ? and I with thee

In heaven? is it possible? I feared I was  
Exiled from light!

*Bertha.* Hush! quick, love! follow me!  
Thou art alive! thou sufferest! O Ralph!

*[As she rushes forward to him, he swoons in her arms.]*

*[In a loud whisper.]* He is dead! he has  
been bleeding! Ralph! awake!—

Mayhap he only swoons—Hans! water!  
Hans!

I shall attract that woman's fiends. He must  
Be carried out. Will Hans be strong enough?

*Enter HANS through the same secret door.*

See, Hans! he has fainted, if he be not dead!  
Say, can you carry him?

*[HANS lifts him, and all three exeunt through the same passage.]*

SCENE VIII.—*A chamber in the Castle of  
Ravensburg.*

*Enter RALPH and BERTHA. RALPH looks  
pale and worn.*

*Bertha.* I cannot! no! I will not lose you  
now!

Have I confronted Death to save you, Ralph,  
Only that you may wantonly leap back  
Into those dreadful Arms, away from me?

*Ralph.* Nay, darling, spare me! *Bertha,*  
you have plucked

Me from far fouler arms than Death's!  
From Sin's

Embrace you have delivered me! Your love  
Awoke in me the blessed thirst for God!

Now help me higher in my climb to where  
You dwell with Him, ethereally pure!

You will not keep me far from Him! My crime  
I loathe: I trample: I repudiate!

And still it hangs a millstone round my neck!  
And still the hideous ghost of it will dog

My path; nor aught can lay the phantom,  
only

A full and free confession before men,  
Whom I have injured: who demand by right  
The blood of whoso sheddeth blood; should  
they

Require, indeed, a less atonement—well!  
For since I have thee once again, how rich,  
How sweet, how precious 'tis to live!—but  
then

Some innocence may suffer for my fault—

*Bertha (weeping: after a pause).* Ah,  
Ralph! my husband in the sight of  
Heaven!

My grand and noble lover! Dare I hinder  
Thee from the sacrifice thou deemest God  
Commands? I glory in thy grandeur, now  
Thou hast returned among thy peers, to lead  
The hosts of Light, deserted for awhile! . . .  
Yet—how to bear it?

Ralph! they never would  
Slay thee, their saviour, their deliverer,  
Because thou slewest their worst enemy  
In self-defence!

*Ralph.* Nay, love, it was mine own  
Old sin that hurled me blindly into this!  
Ah! you have said you knew—

I dare not look  
Into your face,—you should have spurned  
me far—

I am unworthy of you! Let me die!  
'Tis better so,—yea, leave me! I may fall  
Even as did my father: I have found  
His written words of impotent remorse!  
But I will pray my countrymen for death,—  
The death I have deserved! No, I'll not live  
To drag you down, as Sigismund dragged her,  
My loving, suffering mother!

*Bertha.* Love, forbear!  
You break my heart! You will not fall like  
him!

You are delivered now! for God hath heard  
My prayer: our mutual love will keep thee  
strong.—

Never! they will not—dare not—doom to  
death!

Myself will plead before the court!

*Ralph.* Ah, *Bertha!*

SCENE IX.—*The Court of Justice of the  
new Republic.*

*The Magistrates—among them GENERAL  
CHIALDERER—are sitting under an  
old sycamore-tree; guards, and a great*

*assembly of people around. SIR WALTER DAVENANT is also seated, a little way apart, stooping, with his white head bent in his hands.*

*The President of the Court.* The Count of Ravensburg, now reigning Prince Of Rheinthal, sues for judgment at our hands, As our co-burgher, member of our league.

*[There are heard reiterated shouts of "Long live Count Ravensburg!" "Long live the Prince of Rheinthal!" there is waving of kerchiefs, and swaying of the people to and fro around RALPH, for whom a passage is made by the guards with much difficulty.]*

*Enter RALPH.*

*Ralph.* Gentlemen, I salute you. Here I stand Demanding sentence on a criminal.

*The President.* Prince, welcome! Name the man whom you accuse.

*Ralph.* Sir, 'tis no other than myself! I slew

Lord Adrian of Wolfsberg : *[Sensation. Let me tell*

The circumstance, and reason of the deed.

It was in duel : but I made him fight

All unawares, with no observance of

The wonted usages of private war.

I only felt that he or I must die!

Such was my fierce resolve. We fought—  
he fell

In a solitary place we met by night.

There was one only witness of the crime.

He is here now, and he can testify

If I speak truth.

*The President.* What was your motive, sir?

*Ralph (hesitates, and speaks low).* He swore he would divulge a former sin,

Unless I then and there renounced for ever

My own affianced bride—himself had wooed

Her vainly! And it was my brother, sir,

Whom thus I killed! *[Sensation.]*

*The President (after a pause).* Did you indeed commit

The offence wherewith he charged you?

*Ralph.*

Sir, I did.

*[Silence.]*

*The President.* Where is the witness who can testify

You are no reckless wronger of your own

Fair reputation? for until this hour,

We trusted our own honour less than you.

*Ralph.* Sir! gentlemen! I grovel at God's feet,

And yours, repentant, waiting your award!

Whate'er your doom, I bow to it : be just.

The unimpeachable, the only voice,

That can confirm my dismal tale will speak.

My uncle, old Sir Walter, he alone,

Passing, as chance—nay, God!—would have it, saw

Me standing with red sword above the corpse.

Rooted he stood with horror : and I fled

Before he moved, unwitting he was nigh.

*[SIR WALTER comes forward, leaning on a staff and tottering.]*

*Sir W.* All he hath spoken is the truth—but, ah!

You will not be too stern with him! remember

What he hath wrought, hath suffered, for you, sirs!

If you but knew what he hath suffered yonder

In Lady Blanche's terrible torture-pit!

Only profound remorse, deep penitence

Of one who hath been purified by fire,

Could urge him to your feet, with offering

Of his young life ; before whose wistful eyes,

Heretofore seared and dark, now, only now,

Dawn fair unveiling vistas of Love's joy,

With power, and honour, and illustrious name,

The meed of righteous battle for you all,

And martyrdom from rage of your worst foe!

Blanche would have mangled him with pains of hell,

But for his brave young bride, your friend!—her life,

With his, now trembles in the scales you hold!—

And Hans the hunter, God's own nobleman!

Blanche set her bastard on my boy—the same

She would have thrust, bar sinister and all,

On Lady Bertha here, my boy's betrothed !  
 Blanche, who first wrecked the mother, and  
 the sire  
 Of this my son ! . . .

His guilt is clear—but yet  
 Be merciful to my grey hairs ! and him,  
 My poor beloved child ! and to the bride !  
 If we have done you service, and you look  
 For mercy from the Lord !

*Bertha (who had been disguised among the people, and who, coming forward, throws herself at the feet of the judges).*

Ah ! mercy, sirs !

*The President (consults with his colleagues, and, after a pause, speaks, turning to Ralph).*

The Sovereign State hath pardoned, and remits

The penalty of your committed crime ;  
 Balancing previous service of your deeds,  
 And grievous suffering endured for her,  
 Against your guilt—say, friends, are ye content  
 With this our sentence ?

Only one dissents  
 Among the judges : General Chialderer.

*[Acclamation and shouts of joy from the crowd. BERTHA and RALPH fall weeping into one another's arms, and then into SIR WALTER'S, who blesses their union. Exeunt.]*

## ACT VI

*Two years after: the balustraded terrace of Ravensburg, where SIGISMUND and BLANCHE strolled. A moonlight night, near dawn.*

*Enter RALPH and BERTHA. RALPH grave, wan, and feeble; BERTHA supporting him.*

*Bertha.* See how the moon illuminates a fleece  
 Of fleeting mist with faint ghost-rainbow bloom,

Carmine, topaz, and violet ! Behold !  
 She glideth free from the fair labyrinth,

Changing to woof of ghostly gossamer  
 Yon cloud-cape, isled within the dark blue sky,  
 Ere she emergeth from beneath : all hues  
 Seem humbled to more shadowy, softer mood  
 Than is their waking habit ; and the leaves  
 Murmur in happy dream : our valley sleeps  
 With all her vines : the mountain snows afar,  
 Shrined in pure ether, heaven's own cathedral,  
 Repose ; winged angels pass, arrive, or rest.  
 There flows fair Rhine, one silver, where a sail  
 Moves wafted ; whence a tender, mellow sound

Of rebeck, and sweet song ! the air is warm  
 And balmy : do you feel it pleasant, love ?

*Ralph.* Most pleasant ! Can it be we are together ?

And shall be while we live, my bride, my Bertha ?

Have I deserved such blessing ? yet I dare  
 Not hope that this may last ! There hovereth

Of late some evil flutter at my heart—  
 A pain—a weakness—ah ! but still I feel  
 Your face above me in the dungeon dire !  
 Your face above me, when I woke from death  
 Long lingering in the twilight vale that parts  
 Death from our life : and now I hear your voice :

*"Love, I know all : know all : and still I love ;  
 More than before, I love, and I am yours,  
 Yours only ! never answer ! never think !  
 But sleep ; and be at peace ; for I am here !"*  
 When I awoke from fever, you beheld  
 Some horror of the past faint realised

Disturb my face : that was your healing,  
 sweet,

For my torn spirit ! but I feebly mused,  
 And wondering failed to firmly hold such joy,  
 Yet marvelling believed ! my soul fell low  
 Before you, sweet madonna ! for your love  
 Revealed the Love Eternal : I was in  
 heaven !

But now a terrible thought o'ershadowed me :  
 That this my lost life, you have twice restored,  
 Beautiful, precious, under your sweet smile,  
 Was mine no longer—nay, not yours—be-  
 longed,

Forfeited by my crime, to neither of us !

I knew that I must yield me to the will  
 And justice of our people : long I strove  
 To stifle the grim duty, but in vain.  
 And then I deemed it might be well for thee,  
 Albeit thou forgavest : sin revives,  
 Though still and torpid as a winter snake ! . . .  
 Only some shadow of my sin remains :  
 And lowly would I walk therein, as one  
 Who penitently holds the Saviour's hand !

*Bertha.* My Ralph !

Well, good Sir Walter has gone home !  
 And I rejoice he blessed our nuptials, ere  
 Departing : all our folk seem happy now :  
 Dear Hans, and his young bride, too ! you  
 are loved

Of all ; and you are ruling wisely, even  
 As you have holpen them to ampler life.  
 For Blanche, she is in highest favour now  
 At Hungary's imperial capital !  
 Some deem the Emperor may marry her.  
 His cardinals and bishops and all priests  
 Call her a saint : her royal largesses  
 (For still she draws revenue from her lands,  
 And Austria hath enfeoffed her with yet  
 more),

Her never-wavering devotion, stiff  
 And rigid to all airs of heresy ;  
 The ostentatious bend of her high head  
 Under some lowly lintel of the poor ;  
 The picturesque abasement of her pose,  
 A queen in lazars, laying the rude feet  
 Of mobs ; these virtues canonise the dame,  
 While yet she lives : men may fall prone  
 before

The relic of her bones when she is dead.  
 But you and I, dear, shall not envy her.  
 All's hers, poor thing, save righteousness and  
 love :

The world applauds death's mimicry of life :  
 She hath all royal raiment of a Queen ;  
 Only herself lies dying under it !—

Yet in her, too, may live a gleam of grace—  
 [ *The Phantom of SIGISMUND appears  
 on the terrace.*

Ha ! Ralph ! what is it ? by the balustrade !  
 Yon fearful shape !

*Ralph.* Great Heaven ! 'tis my father !

Now will I look well : yea and speak with  
 him ! . . .

[ *A pause. The Phantom grows fainter  
 and fainter, though it does not quite  
 disappear.*

His form is growing faint : he vanishes !

Bertha, the vision ever showed a face  
 Of anguish, horror, and despair : it froze  
 My blood beholding—did you note it now ?  
 It seemed not fearful ! wore aspect of one  
 Who wins repose and comfort, after pain  
 Unutterable, yea, full of love for us !  
 And when it faded, then methought the look  
 Meant, " I have now some rest : farewell !  
 for I

Shall ne'er affright you more, my children !"

Yea,

Now I can love my father !—my poor  
 father ! . . .

*Bertha.* Its look was bent upon the moonlit  
 tower,

Where moonlight stealeth in to kiss soft eyes  
 Of our babe, Sigismund, who lies asleep.

It cannot mean him harm ! He is the child  
 Of love : he sleeps secure upon Love's heart.  
 Lo ! the first delicate faint gleams of Dawn !  
 Still I behold your father's figure ! fading,  
 Like yonder moon, in morning ! Surely, love,  
 For our Tannhaüser the Pope's rod indeed  
 Hath budded ! let us hope so !—you are  
 pale . . .

*Ralph.* I feel some mortal weakness : I  
 shall fall !

*Bertha.* You are very worn and weary :  
 lean on me !

Much have you suffered : home is very near.

[ *RALPH sinks upon BERTHA, who  
 supports him, but he falls on the  
 terrace : she bends over him.*

*Ralph (faintly).* Farewell, love !—for  
 awhile !—our little one ! [ *Dies.*

[ *The Castle clock strikes ; and while  
 the sound of it is dying in air a  
 Watchman from the Castle battle-  
 ments calls, " All's Well !" and a  
 rosy ray begins to tinge the tower,  
 where the child sleeps.*

# A LITTLE CHILD'S MONUMENT<sup>1</sup>

1881

<sup>1</sup> See note G.



TO  
HIS MOTHER  
I DEDICATE THIS

“Ya mati! ya mati!”

“My dead! my dead!”

—*Arabic dirge.*

“And a little child shall lead them.”

## AT HIS GRAVE

If death were an eternal sleep,  
I would lay me down by him,  
Never to wound more, nor to weep,  
Nor grope aweary, maimed, and dim,  
Inflict no injury, no pain,  
Nor ache with this dull doubt again !  
While the birken shadows pass  
O'er the marble and the grass,  
I lean upon thy cross and weep ;  
Very sweet were sleep,  
With ne'er a tear,  
Nor hope nor fear !  
If thou behold me from thy bowers,  
Smile on mine offering of flowers,  
And help me, dear !  
Thou hast entered into life,  
While we rave in mortal strife :  
Love, receive the offering  
Of unworthy words I bring !  
Lo ! I lay them on thy tomb ;  
May they a little lighten gloom.  
Soothe an aching void, and bless  
In love's distress !

Thou should have laid me in my quiet grave,  
Sorrowing calm ;  
And I with folded palm.  
But now above thine own behold I rave !

With all thy life before thee so to die,  
Unseasonably !  
" Whom the gods love die young ;"  
To that sweet saying, then, I clung.

    Ghastly Doubt, and chilling Fear,  
The wan Ages' Quest is here,  
Trembling Hope, and faltering Faith,  
Intent on what God whispereth.  
It was thy leaving me that shook  
Content in this deluding nook  
Of rainbow life, that seems upbuoyed  
A moment in a rayless void ;  
So I sought for firmer ground ;  
And tell to others what I found.

    I would embalm thee in my verse :  
To loving souls it shall rehearse  
Thy loveliness when I am cold,  
And fragrant with it, may enfold  
For other hearts in misery  
Faint solace ; words were sweet to me  
From hearts, who mourned what seemed  
    to be  
Dear, like thee :  
These are thy swathings of rare spice,  
A golden shrine with gems of price,  
A monument of my device.



## A LITTLE CHILD'S MONUMENT

### LAMENT

I AM lying in the tomb, love,  
Lying in the tomb,  
Tho' I move within the gloom, love,  
Breathe within the gloom !  
Men deem life not fled, dear,  
Deem my life not fled,  
Tho' I with thee am dead, dear,  
I with thee am dead,  
O my little child !

What is the grey world, darling,  
What is the grey world,  
Where the worm is curled, darling,  
The deathworm is curled ?  
They tell me of the spring, dear !  
Do I want the spring ?  
Will she waft upon her wing, dear,  
The joy-pulse of her wing,  
Thy songs, thy blossoming,  
O my little child !

For the hallowing of thy smile, love,  
The rainbow of thy smile,  
Gleaming for a while, love,  
Gleaming to beguile !  
Replunged me in the cold, dear,  
Leaves me in the cold,  
And I feel so very old, dear,  
Very, very old !

Would they put me out of pain, dear,  
Out of all my pain,  
Since I may not live again, dear,  
Never live again !

I am lying in the grave, love,  
In thy little grave,  
Yet I hear the wind rave, love,  
And the wild wave !

I would lie asleep, darling,  
With thee lie asleep,  
Unhearing the world weep, darling,  
Little children weep !  
O my little child !

### DARK SPRING

Now the mavis and the merle  
Lavish their full hearts in song ;  
Peach and almond boughs unfurl  
White and purple bloom along  
A blue burning air,  
All is very fair :  
But ah ! the silence and the sorrow !  
I may not borrow  
Any anodyne for grief  
From the joy of flower or leaf,  
No healing to allay my pain  
From the cool of air or rain ;  
Every sweet sound grew still,  
Every fair colour pale,  
When his life began to wane !  
They may never live again !  
A child's voice and visage will  
Evermore about me fail ;  
And my weary feet will go  
Labouring as in deep snow :  
Though the year with glowing wine  
Fill the living veins of vine,  
While a faint moon hangs between  
Broidery of a leafy screen ;  
Though the glossy fig may swell,  
And Night hear her Philomel,  
While sweet lemon blossom breathes,  
And fair Sun his falchion wreathes  
With rich depending golden fruit,

Or crimson roses at his foot,  
All is desolate and mute !  
Dark to-day, and dark to-morrow !  
Ah ! the silence and the sorrow !

## NIGHT AND MORNING

SUGGESTED BY CHOPIN'S FUNERAL MARCH

### I

IN the grey cathedral,  
In the aisles of twilight,  
Wails an awful music,  
Whelming my drowned spirit  
Fathom-deep in woe.  
The hoar stone of ages  
Palpitates disaster,  
Breathes aware with sorrow,  
Weighs me down to death !  
All the immense wan spaces  
Pregnant with dead faces,  
Cold, carven forms arise :  
And grey walls bring forth !  
Vasty vans of darkness,  
Swordsweeps of desolation,  
Hound me to dim death !  
Born from the deep ocean  
Of sounding mystery,  
In the ghostly forest  
Of colossal pillars  
Grows a dread procession :  
Tramp ! tramp ! tramp !  
Phantoms vast, sepulchral,  
With dim downward eyes,  
Move where yawns a dreary  
Fathomless abyss.

What do they bear ? they bear him,  
My All, my Heart, my Heaven !  
They let him fall therein !  
Fall ! fall ! fall !  
Fall ever in the abyss !  
And my soul wails over,  
Yearns to him in vain !  
Cruel world ! O cruel spirit

Of the world, with ne'er a heart !  
All in vain I moan imploring ;  
Sleep ! sleep ! sleep !

### II

In the grey cathedral  
Dawn red rays of morning,  
And a sweet low music  
Lifts me from the grave.  
My dead pulses flutter,  
As in spring the leaflet,  
Or young flower awaking,  
Wooed by the warm South . . .  
. . . A calm saint on a pinnacle  
Smiles in the day-dawn ;  
Monumental marble  
With warm life-blood glows,  
Sweet small singers warble  
" Live ! live ! live !"  
And lo ! a rush of angels,  
A cloud of spirits bright  
From soft sun-rays of opal,  
Woven to nests of light,  
Among celestial branchings  
Of the embowered height,  
Bear me back my darling,  
Smiling, rosed, alive,  
Alive ! alive ! alive !  
They only meant to scare me,  
All was but in play ;  
The dismal shades were angels  
From my Father's day ;  
Our Father knows why we must weep ;  
He wipes our tears away.

But if a hair might perish  
From his sweet tendrilled head,  
God would be the devil,  
Love and Truth were dead,  
Man a maniac, mooning  
A moment plausibly,  
Joy an idiot fooling,  
And life Death's leprosy !  
No ! no ! no !  
An Eye rules the wild sea  
Of human misery !

## A TOMB AT PALMYRA

FULL twenty years ! and still I seem to stand,  
As then, aloft in the tall tower-tomb  
So far within the expanse of Syrian sand,  
Alone, where long long ages in the gloom  
Of yon stone shelves a human dust hath lain,  
That once breathed, brooded, dared, hoped,  
hated, loved !

Awhile o'erwept, and worshipped with fond  
pain,

How stealthily the memory removed  
From hearts who dreamed that never it could  
wane !

Later, the men who built the tomb dispersed,  
Their conquerors were heedless of the dead ;  
Race following race, remembrance of the  
first,

Like some fair pageant of the cloud, is fled ;  
They, and the memory of them all erased,  
Faint characters an idle mood hath traced  
In sands of yonder ever-wandering waste.

The shelves are void ; an alien spoiler soon  
The dear embalmed remains hath lightly  
strewn

Upon these raving winds that roam the wild,  
For ever to be scattered, whirled, or piled  
With dust that loved, scorned, knew not that  
they were,

For ever to be heaped, and hounded there,  
In amicable rest, or rivalry  
With never-animate dust of the dun sea. . . .

. . . Anarchic spirits of the desert blast

Celebrate all the ruin of the past !

Shadowy Murder's dismal dialogue,

Conspiring, ere she leap to disembody

Annihilating vials on my head,

Who dare to stand alive among the dead.

Carousals, wails from hollow hearts resound,

Long agony of maniac souls around,

Low moaning, shrieking, fading in a swoon,

Thundering exultant through the rifted tomb,

And bearing down my heart with swoop of  
doom ;

"Cease ! cease from trouble ! hope thou, or  
despair ;

Wait but a little, thou too shalt be there !"

## DEAD

## I

WHERE the child's joy-carol  
Rang sweeter than the spheres,  
There, centre of deep silence,  
Darkness, and tears,  
On his bed  
The child lay dead.

## II

There a man sat stolid,  
Stupefied and cold,  
Save when the lamp's flicker  
To poor love told  
Some mocking lie  
Of quivering eye,  
Or lip that said,  
"*He is not dead.*"

## III

Weary Night went weeping,  
Moaning long and low,  
Till dim Dawn, awaking,  
Found them so—  
The heart that bled,  
And his dim dead.

## IV

"*Measure him for his coffin,*"  
He heard a stranger say ;  
And then he broke to laughing,  
"*God ! measure my poor clay,*  
*And shut me in my coffin,*  
*A soul gone grey !*  
*For hope lies dead,*  
*Life is fled.*"

## THE KING AND THE PEASANT

WORLD-WIDE possessions, populous lands  
The monarch doth inherit,  
And lordlier kingdoms he commands,  
Fair realms within the spirit.

The monarch had a little son,  
 A child of five years old,  
 The loveliest earth ere looked upon ;  
 And he is lying cold.  
 The king is in the olive grove,  
 A hind sings in the tree ;  
 Below, the infant of his love  
 Is babbling merrily.  
 The father beats the boughs, and while  
 Dark oval olives fly,  
 The boy, with many a laugh and smile,  
 Pursues them far and nigh.  
 Blue sea between the grey-green leaves  
 Twinkles, and the sun  
 Through them a playful chequer weaves  
 Over the little one.  
 The monarch gazes all unseen,  
 Tears burning his wan eyes ;  
 Tenderly his love doth lean  
 To bless their Paradise,  
 As through black bars that foul the day,  
 And shut him out from joy :  
 Hear the world-envied monarch say,  
 "Perish, my bauble crown, my toy,  
 All the science, all the sway,  
 Power to mould the world my way,  
 Persuade to beauty the dull clay !  
 Take all ; but leave, ah ! leave my boy,  
 Give me back my life, my joy !  
 This poor rude peasant I would be,  
 Yet dare not breathe the wish that he  
 Were as I am, a king, of misery !"

### "A MILK-WHITE BLOOMED ACACIA TREE"

A MILK-WHITE bloomed acacia tree,  
 A flowery fair lawn,  
 Lark-song upsoaring from the lea,  
 In a rosy dawn ;  
 A little child who, while he sings,  
 Gives light and joy to all, and song, and  
 sunny wings !  
 The green acacia still blooms,  
 And all the fairy flowers,  
 Song thrills the chorister's light plumes  
 In blue celestial bowers ;

Darkling I wander in the wild,  
 Looking for my little child ;  
 I cannot hear his happy voice,  
 Bidding all the world be lovely, and rejoice.

### MOUNTAIN LYRIC

A MOUNTAIN spake to a sunny cloud,  
 "Whither, my child, away?"  
 "Father, the winds are calling loud  
 To fields of air for play !  
 Away ! away !  
 Father, O father, solemn-browed !  
 Fly thou with me for play !"  
 Nestled half in a sunny snow,  
 And half in azure air,  
 The cloudlet, pausing, loth to go  
 And leave the mountain bare,  
 With hazy hair,  
 And misty feet in a sunny snow,  
 May not linger there ;  
 Lithely curled in a merry breeze,  
 With look still turned to earth,  
 Wafted on viewless presences  
 From the mystic mount of birth,  
 With a merry mirth,  
 Summoning fondly as he flees,  
 "O father, leave your earth !"  
 Floating fair into sunny sky,  
 Evanescent away,  
 Praying the pine-veiled heights to fly,  
 Dark furrowed heights of grey ;  
 "Away ! away !"  
 "Our roots are deep, we may not die,"  
 Stern crags responded wearily ;  
 "Fly thou away,  
 O child of day !  
 The hallowing of thy sunny smile,  
 Thy fingers of cool mist,  
 Soothed my weary soul erewhile,  
 And since thy lips have kissed,  
 Lightning, blast, nor lashing rain,  
 Snows, nor howling hurricane  
 Mar my deep rest,  
 Remembering thy heavenly smile ;  
 Fade thou away !  
 And leave me grey !"

## EARLY PRIMROSE

THERE was a paly primrose,  
 Budding very early  
 In the little garden,  
 When he lay so ill.  
 "Do you think I may be  
 Well enough to go there  
 When the flower opens,  
 Papa?" he asked of me.  
 But only a day after  
 Our little Sunshine left us,  
 And the primrose opened  
 The very day he died.  
 I wonder if he saw it,  
 Saw the flower open,  
 Went to pay the visit  
 Yonder after all!  
 I know we laid the flower  
 On a stilly bosom  
 Of an ivory image;  
 But I want to know  
 If indeed he wandered  
 In the little garden,  
 Or noted on the bosom  
 Of his fading form  
 The paly primrose open;  
 How I want to know!

## SLEEP

AIRILY the leaves are playing  
 In blue summer light,  
 Fugitive soft shadow laying  
 Lovingly o'er marble white,  
 Where he lies asleep.  
 Lillies of the valley bending  
 Lowly bells amid the green;  
 Sweet moss roses meekly lending  
 Their soft beauty to the scene  
 Of his quiet sleep.  
 All around him heather glowing  
 Purple in the sun;  
 Sound of bees and bird o'erflowing  
 Lull my lost, my little one,  
 Lying there asleep.

Harsher sight or sound he banished,  
 For my child is gone to rest;  
 These are telling of my vanished  
 In the language of the blest,  
 Wake him not from sleep!

## IN THE CORSICAN HIGHLANDS

CLOUD-CHAOS surges o'er a crest sublime,  
 That seems forked lightning spell-bound into  
 stone;  
 Abruptly steep flame-pointed precipices,  
 Dark as the night, dissolve to opaline  
 In phantom foldings of circumfluent sea.  
 Their natures blend confused; the mists  
 assume  
 A semblance of impenetrable rock;  
 Stern rock relents to luminous faint cloud.

Their banners rent as in uproarious war,  
 Behold! the vaporous battalions  
 Unclose, dispelled and routed of loud winds,  
 That drive them scared, and scattered; so  
 Jehovah  
 Clove that astounded sea for Israel.  
 Yonder beneath me, the enormous crag  
 Reveals, between grey ghostly robes of them,  
 Solid, and rude, and perpendicular,  
 A mighty front of Titans grandly piled,  
 Umber, and gory red, and pallid green,  
 Reared in some alien world beyond the  
 cloud,  
 Stronghold stupendous of immortal gods.

The rude, immense, straight pillars of grey  
 pine  
 Scale heaven, sustaining tempest-writhen  
 roofs  
 Of scant, green, level umbrage; they are  
 built  
 Athwart yon vaporous and vasty walls  
 Of far-off mountain: over them arise  
 Ruinous tower, fantastic pinnacle,  
 And icy spire in a blue burning air.  
 They overhang deep, forest-filled ravines  
 Wandering seaward; whose dim serpentine  
 Night ever hears a solemn utterance

Of torrents, with deep monotone attuned  
 To these wind-oracles of ancient pine.  
 Yonder a gaunt trunk-Skeleton upbraids  
 With blasted arms the Bolt that shattered it.  
 Tusky black monsters reign within the gloom  
 Of forest, and dead waters desolate :  
 Dim mists drive blindly through portentous  
 trees,  
 While a weird Sun blinks dwarfed within  
 the drift :  
 Legions of shadowy shaggy ilex climb  
 Yon narrow-cloven hollows of the crag.

Now evening falls: an aromatic breath  
 Of amber oozing from a dun-red bark,  
 And mountain herb, and many a mountain  
 flower  
 Pervades the air slow clearing from the cloud :  
 A vaselike cleft between two snowy peaks  
 Glowingly fills with a pale violet ;  
 Beneath appears fair Ocean's purple line,  
 Far away from far portals of the pass.  
 Lower, a surge of huge dun purple rock,  
 Tumultuously contorted, rolls a rude  
 And shadowy chaos interposed between  
 Dark peaks and me : Night's ever-deepening  
 gloom  
 Engulfs the gorges : all is mighty Music,  
 Phantasmal symphony of ghostly Form,  
 A visionary Chorus with no sound !

Stern-visaged Isle ! upon thy rocky breast  
 Two sons were nurtured, heritors of fame.  
 The one drew pride and ruin from thy veins,  
 Towering portentous, terrible, alone,  
 A scourge of God ; Napoleon drew power  
 To desolate the world ; while Paoli  
 Drank from dark fountains of thy resolute  
 blood  
 The patriot's unshamed integrity.

Behold ! I stand within a place of graves :  
 Low wooden crosses o'er the lonely dead.  
 Within the wondrous amphitheatre  
 Of mountains overshadowing they rest ;  
 Watched, warded, in those awful arms they  
 lie.  
 Ah ! Nature here hath roused herself to robe

Her oft unheeded royalty in robes  
 Of godlike splendour, that our eyes may see ;  
 Hath sounded, as with trumpet-blast of doom,  
 That our dull ears may slumber not, but hear !  
 Brands with fierce fire upon the heedless  
 heart  
 Her names of wonder ! yea, I know ye now :  
 I bow my head in worship ! yea, I feel  
 Your majesty of godlike Presences ;  
 Stand here abashed, with mortal head bowed  
 low  
 Before you, Angels, Demons of the Lord !

Yet with no rapture of strong youth's  
 acclaim  
 I hail you, as a lowlier brother may  
 Hail a liege lord, a hero, or a king.  
 But I have come into your awful courts,  
 A poor blind broken pilgrim from afar,  
 Who faltering chances upon some august  
 Assembly of dread princes, and bows low,  
 Yet only craves to learn if haply he,  
 Who used to lead his poor blind footsteps on  
 With such clear-seeing love, a little child,  
 Who has been lost to him, alas ! for long,  
 And whom he vainly seeks about the world,  
 About the dreary, barren world, be here ?  
 But meeting no response to his demand,  
 He can but idly weep a moment, ere  
 He grope his weary way abroad again.

These are but void and ruined courts to me  
 Of faded splendour, unremembered Power !  
 I cannot see aright, I cannot feel.  
 And while men prate of knowing all the laws,  
 The mortal cold possessing human hearts  
 Weighs down their eyes in deep sepulchral  
 gloom.  
 But if some Angel's sword from forth the  
 night,  
 With vasty voice of Doom, by human tongues  
 Called thunder, leapt, and smote me out of all  
 These evil dreams named living, might I find  
 My little child, and with him find the Lord ?

We journey ever higher, through a grove  
 Of moonlit chestnut, where a babbling stream,  
 At intervals, in open forest glades,

Flashes with ruffled, wandering, pale flame.  
The air is richly laden with sweet spoil  
From fragrant flower, and foliage faint-green;  
Shadowy-folded hills and dells involved  
Whisper of verdure lush, luxuriant,  
Known to fair elves, or rills who tinkling  
glide,

Telling sweet secrets, haunted of shy beams,  
Whene'er the whims of leafy Ariels,  
And cloudy gossamer, aloft allow  
Their gentle wandering; tall asphodel,  
And flowery fennel, either side our way,  
Often we dim discern; but where the woods  
No longer in their colonnades of gloom  
Involve our path, beyond the precipice,  
Behold! how all the regions of the north,  
Height, depth, and breadth, are held, filled,  
dominated

By one supreme pale presence, Monte d'Oro!  
His spirit-robes far floating, a dim grey,  
Sombre with forest, pallid with the moon,  
His kingly crest snow-gleaming to the stars.

Pan is not dead! He lives! He lives for  
ever!

These awful Demiurgic Powers named Nature  
Nourish, involve a half-alive, blind soul,  
A human soul, who fondly deems them dead.  
Surely the Lord is making us alive!  
Mine aching wound shall heal; for I shall find  
My lost, for whom I long; from thee, my  
friend,

The weary burden of thy doubt shall pass.  
Sorrow and Wrong are pangs of a new birth:  
All we who suffer bleed for one another;  
No life may live alone, but all in all;  
We lie within the tomb of our dead selves,  
Waiting till One command us to arise.

### IN THE ALPS

ONCE more, once more, the heavenly heights  
environ,

Here in the land remembering Rousseau,  
Thrilling with songs of Shelley and of Byron,  
And lovelier songs of lives purer than snow!  
Beautiful mother of the brave and free,  
Mother of deeds that live eternally,

A beacon, like thy sunlit spires up yonder,  
A clarion, like the unfurling of loud thunder  
Among thine echoing ravines and rocks,  
And turbulent elemental shocks,  
Far-rolling banner, blazoned with fierce light,  
Shaken in false faces of the hosts of night!

I deem it well awhile to linger here.  
My weary heart was weakened with pale fear,  
And loss of him who made the world so dear,  
Low care, dull disappointment, and vain  
strife

With strangling sins, and problems of mad  
life:

My conquered soul lay open to despair,  
Whose cold grey waters moaned unchallenged  
there.

For not alone my dearest hope lay slain,  
And the few loved ones who are left me wane  
Like fairy gold, but all around lie blent  
In one dishonoured ruin, pale and rent,  
Children with women, lately fair as day,  
Now overmoaned by men who rave and pray  
For rest beside them! And my country  
hounds

The oppressor on! she jeers at the death-  
wounds  
Of human hearts! England, who freed the  
slave,

Now, for her base greed, thrusts him to his  
grave!<sup>27</sup>

Alas! in her dear bosom want and crime  
Horribly thrive, and lurk, waiting red harvest-  
time!

It was before we knew him that I came;  
And now the glory seems no more the same.  
I longed to lead his childish footsteps here,  
And watch the wonder in his eyes appear,  
And welcome his glad accents ringing clear.  
I only hear low wind in the ravine,

A voice of one disconsolate who may lean  
Among dark pines, lamenting what hath  
been!

Voice of mad Time, who blindly brings to  
birth,

And blindly ruins all her children's mirth,  
And crooning idly, sheds their petals upon  
earth!

O desolate mother of mortals, who bewailest  
All thy sweet sons torn from thee, nor  
availest

Aught to appease the hunger of dim Death,  
Who feedeth on thy cherished children's  
breath!

Is it indeed as Sense and Seeming say,  
Or hath yon faint far Hope firmer foothold  
than they;

And may we climb from wildering mist to  
undeluding day?

The shepherd calling to his fellows  
In sparry hollows of the crags,  
Many a mountain demon bellows  
Among wild, caverned peaks and jags.  
Flowers in the pastoral valley  
Ever with soft breezes dally,  
Mellow bells of mild-eyed kine,  
While they saunter, and recline,  
Soothe the sense; on waters green  
A white-winged shallop sails serene.  
In a lofty upland bower  
Of foliage, whose verdures dower  
Far-off bloom of lake and hill  
With lovelier beauty, musing still,  
'Neath young leaves I see fair roses  
Glowing over violet water,  
Whose calm iris-gleam reposes,  
Faintly clouded, Heaven's daughter,  
Leman's poet-haunted water!  
A far village in the heat  
Resting at the mountain's feet.  
Beyond, how solemnly!  
Among the cliffs of Meillerie,  
Opal shafts of misty shining  
Stream athwart the deep ravine,  
Where I never cease divining  
Tall rude phantom forms that lean  
In reverie  
Over one another's shoulder,  
Solemn guardians of the gorge,  
Till a fleecy cloudlet fold her  
Wings awhile upon the verge,  
A well-beloved guest:  
In the gloom of mountain splendour,  
In dusk oriental gold  
Of their rich raiment, oh, how tender

Seemed the silver-pinioned rover  
From a far celestial fold!  
Rude earth spirits may but love her,  
Nor ever dare to hold  
From her rest!  
And a smile stole over furrowed  
Faces of old earthworn mountain;  
To each and all who so had sorrowed  
The dewy cloud was youth's own foun-  
tain

Of happiness divine.  
Lo! now the loftier heights all hoary  
Gleam with white wings of Angel pre-  
sence,  
So fledged with plumes we scarce may  
know  
Sheeny cloud from downy snow,  
Until I marvel if, in the glory  
Of yon serene ethereal pleance,  
Mine angel, mine!  
Nestle softly with the rest;  
If a moment he reposes  
On the aerial mount of Roses!  
Or where from Jungfrau's radiant breast  
Roll white thunderous avalanches,  
And the dim ravine swift blanches  
With a ghostly snow  
Fair, far below!  
So white-winged Consolation glides  
Into a heart where Death abides . . .  
. . . Is it a loud acclaim of deep im-  
mortal voices,  
When all the effulgent host of warriors  
rejoices,  
And the ever-burning fire  
Of holy love leaps higher,  
For wings of seraphs rushing from their  
light on high,  
Into earth's deadly shadow, to help mor-  
tality? . . .  
. . . Or near Eiger's pyramid  
May my lovely child lie hid,  
With the pulsing evening star,  
In realms of roses fair and far?

And tho' I come no more as erst I came,  
Fleet-foot as wind, with youthful eyes  
aflame,

Eager to scale thy snows, and gladly dare,  
 Free as a fawn, heart-whole as mountain air,  
 But halting with dull weight of years and pain,  
 Shame and remorse, and little doubtful gain ;  
 Surely 'tis well once more awhile to be  
 Here in the morning land of holiest Liberty !  
 Here in the presence-chamber of high Nature,  
 Here at the feet of her immortal stature,  
 Gazing within her calm supernal eyes,  
 My soul, assoiled from earth's insanities,  
 Casts the low corse of folly, lust, and death,  
 And loosed from suffocation, draws free breath,  
 Inhaling draughts of powers divine, that are  
 Eternal strength, in spirit, earth and star ;  
 Learneth endurance from stern, silent moun-  
 tains,

And youthful hope from the ever-flowing  
 fountains,

Indomitable ardour by strong-sounding floods,  
 Deep contemplation in dim-dreaming woods,  
 Lofty aspiring, with firm faith,  
 From all yon soaring hierarchy saith,  
 And the sublime still host of worlds that  
 travelleth ;

Untiring battle with the foe within,  
 Until, through Christ, I conquer all my sin,  
 And sleepless war upon His enemies without,  
 Till all rebels bow willing thralls to Love,  
 whom they so flout.

Yea, thou, my darling, gleaming out of God  
 A moment o'er the wintry path I trod,  
 Tellest, we toil, we climb, we faint, we fall ;  
 Yet ever rise, until we rest, Love reigning all  
 in all !

Yea, now and evermore Love reigneth over  
 all.

## ONLY A LITTLE CHILD

### *A Voice.*

Only a little child !

Stone cold upon a bed !

Is it for him you wail so wild,

As though the very world were dead ?

Arise, arise !

Threaten not the tranquil skies !

Do not all things die ?

'Tis but a faded flower !

Dear lives exhale perpetually

With every fleeting hour.

Rachel for ever weeps her little ones ;

For ever Rizpah mourneth her slain sons.

Arise, arise !

Threaten not the tranquil skies !

Only a little child !

Long generations pass :

Behold them flash a moment wild

With stormlight, a pale headlong mass

Of foam, into unfathomable gloom !

Worlds and leaves have all one doom.

Arise, arise !

Threaten not the tranquil skies.

Should Earth's tremendous Shade

Spare only you and yours ?

Who regardeth empires fade

Untroubled, who impassive pours

Human joy, a mere spilt water,

Revels red with human slaughter !

Arise, arise !

Threaten not the tranquil skies.

### *Another Voice.*

. . . Only a little child !

He was the world to me.

Pierced to the heart, insane, defiled,

All holiest hope ! foul mockery,

Childhood's innocent mirth and rest ;

Man's brief life a brutal jest.

There is no God ;

Earth is Love's sepulchral sod !

### *Another Voice.*

Only a little child !

Ah ! then, who brought him here ?

Who made him loving, fair, and mild,

And to your soul so dear ?

His lowly spirit seemed divine,

Burning in a heavenly shrine.

Arise, arise !

With pardon for the tranquil skies.

Only a little child !  
 Who sleeps upon God's heart !  
 Jesus blessed our undefiled,  
 Whom no power avails to part  
 From the life of Him who died  
 And liveth, whatsoe'er betide !  
     Whose are eyes  
 Tranquiller than starlit skies !

Only a little child !  
 For whom all things are :  
 Spring and summer, winter wild,  
 Sea and earth, and every star,  
 Time, the void, pleasure and pain,  
 Hell and heaven, loss and gain !  
 Life and death are his, and he  
 Rests in God's eternity.  
     Arise, arise !  
 Love is holy, true, and wise,  
 Mirrored in the tranquil skies.

### GOD'S CHILD

HE wanders round the garden wild,  
 I hear him singing sweet ;  
 I know it is my fairy child,  
 I hear his dancing feet.

Birds low warble in the nest,  
 Leaves murmur merrily ;  
 My boy is leaning on the breast  
 Of God most tranquilly.

He gazes in deep eyes Divine,  
 With innocent clear eyes ;  
 He is God's baby more than mine ;  
 The Father is all-wise.

Carol, my darling ! laugh and leap !  
 For art thou not God's own ? . . .  
 . . . Ah ! wildly, wildly must I weep . . .  
 . . . God hath destroyed His son !

Stabbed with a sudden traitor thrust  
 The heart so unafraid !  
 Then flung him down into the dust,  
 To perish on the blade !

Earth felt, and, staggered with the blow,  
 Reeled shuddering under me !  
 Dead worlds, like shrivelled leaves, fell low  
 From Life's uprooted tree !

How shall I name Thee, Thou Supreme ?  
 Hate, Treachery. or Crime ? . . .  
 . . . When may we rise from our dark dream  
 Beyond the bounds of Time ? . . .

He is but folded closer still  
 Within the Father's bosom,  
 Lest our earth airs may work him ill,  
 My baby boy, my blossom !

### MUSIC AND THE CHILD

#### I

AN organ-player comes rarely round  
 To our lone moorland place ;  
 My darling at the welcome sound  
 Runs with laughter in his face  
 To the nursery window, hailing,  
 With melodious mirth unfailing,  
 The sunburnt, black-bearded man,  
 Who greets him in Italian.  
 Then he brings and sets a chair,  
 Humming over every air,  
 Feigns to turn a handle deftly,  
 Feigns to talk Italian swiftly,  
 Fair in little blouse of blue,  
 Sweet of heart and form and hue.

#### II

Pale, my love, with dews of anguish  
 From the night beneath his curls,  
 Lies asleep ; and while we languish  
 In despair, behold ! there purls  
 A rill of music from afar :  
 Can the favourite organ jar  
 So upon our hearts ? We fear  
 Lest it waken him ; yet hear  
 Him, waking, pray for it to come  
 Under the window of his room,  
 Asking that his friend, the player,  
 May have food ; we grant the prayer.  
 Then he lists to every tune,  
 Growing very weary soon.

## III

Baby lies upon the bed,  
 And our hearts with him lie dead.  
 Baby lies with fair white blossom  
 In his hair and hand and bosom :  
 Only he is lovelier far  
 Than earth's fairest flowers are !  
 And while we cower, smitten low  
 By our baby boy's death-blow,  
 Draws again the organ near . . .  
 Ah ! Baby never more may hear.

## IV

When the little child was going,  
 From his lips came softly flowing,  
 Flowing dreamily, the tune  
 Of a hymn that asks a boon  
 In childish accents of the Saviour,  
 Who, by the love in his behaviour,  
 Showed God cherishes a child ;  
 And whensoever pain made him wild,  
 His mother sang it ; then, released,  
 The child himself sang on, nor ceased  
 On earth till he commenced in heaven.  
 For I think that fatal even,  
 While upon death's wave he drifted,  
 While the mist of life was lifted,  
 On our earth-shore he heard his mother,  
 And pure angels on the other ;  
 We and they hearing the low voice of him  
 who travelled  
 Between us, darkling, a wee pilgrim who the  
 mystery unravelled !

Even so she sang to him,  
 While his lovely eyes grew dim,  
 In fair former eves, while he  
 Loosed waifs of singing dreamily,  
 Till he floated into sleep.  
 Now it is more strange and deep.  
 "Jesus," he murmured, hearing the Lord call :  
 "Fear not, My darling, on My heart to fall !"

## V

Then in the depth of our despair,  
 A vision found me lying there.  
 She and I were cowering  
 Before the swoop of Death's dark wing,

That, sweeping him to nothingness,  
 Plunged our souls in the abyss,  
 Stone-eyed to stare upon the gloom,  
 Frantic to challenge the deaf tomb,  
 Beating upon its iron door  
 For him who shall return no more !  
 Death echoing from his awful vault  
 In ghastly mockery of our assault !  
 Wanderers ever, wanting only one,  
 Calling upon the name of our lost little son !

But I dreamt that she and I  
 Were gazing very mournfully  
 On the organ, as we deemed  
 Disused and broken. Then it seemed  
 That his dear nurse, who loved him well,  
 And cherished more than I can tell,  
 Came unaware, and on her breast  
 She bore him whom we laid to rest,  
 Our darling, glorious, health-rosed,  
 Whose dark, dewy eyes reposed  
 On some far-off enrapturing vision  
 Of the children's realm elysian !  
 Ah ! with what transport we kissed him !  
 Not dead ! not dead ! howe'er we missed him !  
 Heaven, too, vouchsafes another token ;  
 The little organ was not broken !  
 Lo ! baby turns it round and round,  
 Rejoicing in the wonted sound,  
 Yea, singing in his blouse of blue,  
 Lovelier than we ever knew.

## VI

While he lay nightly racked with pain,  
 Wept and shrieked the hurricane.  
 Yea, on that terrible night he died,  
 The clamour of fell fiends, beside  
 Themselves with hell's blaspheming anger,  
 Exultant in his god-wept languor,  
 Seemed to hound him on to death,  
 Hungry for his innocent breath !  
 But now what raves it for, and howls  
 Around with moan of drifted souls ?  
 Are ye not satiate with such  
 A pure white victim to your clutch,  
 Yielded by the Powers above,  
 Who yet we dare to dream are Love ?

The loveliest, most heavenly-hearted  
Child ever by themselves imparted  
To this poor earth of ours !

So moaning

In fierce despair, amid the groaning  
Of those evil blasts I heard  
A still small voice, as of a bird.  
Nay, bird had ne'er so sweet a voice,  
Nor ever bird may so rejoice ;  
No spring that babbles in the summer,  
Nor flower-enamoured fairy hummer !  
What is it, Lord ? can it be human ?  
Song of child, or song of woman ?  
Some loving Ariel doth toy  
In self-abandonment of joy !  
Like, yet unlike our vanished angel !  
I know I deem it an evangel  
From my darling, hovering  
In the very storm, to sing  
Near my yearning soul, to tell  
What seems the blasphemy of hell  
Is love, to him who loveth well !

. . . In bluest air the melody  
On silver wings appears to fly ;  
And lo ! in live germander blue  
A threefold flower-cluster flew,  
Child-seraphim, arrayed in white,  
Fair with dewy eyes of light ;  
As when two swallows on the wing,  
Circle each other dallying ;  
In playful love we hear them cleaving  
Blue air with dances they are weaving ;  
So on tender pulsing pinion  
Audibly the heaven's dominion  
Many a threefold flower-band  
Of children clove, while in their bland  
Spirit-wreathing, when one passed,  
Shadow delicate fell fast  
From him upon a sister child,  
Softening to mood more mild  
Her raptured whiteness undefiled.

#### VII

When the jubilant hymnals roam,  
Buoyant-winged as sunnys foam,  
High-flung, wind-wafted, in the dome,

Or solemn-branched cathedral aisle,  
From pure boy-bosoms, all the while  
To me it seems my darling mingles  
With the sound that burns and tingles,  
Floating calm in the calm sea  
Of all unshadowed harmony.  
Holy, Holy, Holy ! mount  
Arrowy song-flight from the fount  
Of our earth-music ! that descending  
Erst from heaven, will be blending  
Now with his full songs of joy,  
Who, lark-like, sings where no alloy  
Of earth a gentle soul may trouble  
In her perennial sweet bubble,  
Whose lily petal ever fair  
Reposes, feeding in live air.

#### NATURE AND THE DEAD

*"He is made one with nature."*—SHELLEY

#### I

I MUSED below dark everlasting rocks,  
Hearing the circling happy seamew cry ;  
I listened to the gentle water-shocks  
Of cool clear emerald, how peacefully  
Wandering thro' cavern hall, or labyrinth  
Worn in the cliff's heart ! flowering seathrift  
Sang to blithe bees, and breezes ; the red  
    plinth  
Of ocean-palace pillar in a lift  
And fall of playful sunny wavelets glowed ;  
Until I floated on the hyaline  
Into a mystic ocean fay's abode,  
Hung with pale sea-grape, walled with  
    coralline,  
Gemmed with live jade and garnet, or  
    adorning  
Of gleaming opal-hearted passion-flowers,  
Living, blue, crimson, as a radiant morning ;  
While wavelight all the rocky temple dowers,  
Golden, blood-jasper, grey, with woven smiles  
Quavering musical, 'mid velvet piles  
Wine-dark, fern-tufted ; I am afloat in froth,  
That seethes and sparkles on a heaving clear  
Sunned chrysopraxe ; hued like a burnet-moth  
Here the cliff shows, shell-crustad wholly here

With shells, bathing their lucid filaments  
 In lapsing crystal ; among twilit grotts,  
 Fulfilling strange mysterious intents,  
 I hear far waters commune in dim spots  
 With weird rock-comrade, monster fish, or seal,  
 Or slumberous anemones that feel.  
 Through yon chaotic arch of vasty height,  
 Of grand proportion, hewn by Titan hand  
 Of turbulent tempest, flying in blue light  
 Appear white sails, and capes of basking land,  
 Rich hazy brown ; here towering dread forms  
 Of silent crag brood awful and alone :  
 These have absorbed all terror of the storms,  
 That wear, combat, caress their writhen stone.

## II

My soul said then to Earth and Air :  
 "How can I deem that ye would dare  
 To smile and dally, if ye did  
 The deed of darkness ! holding hid  
 My stolen child, my withered blossom,  
 Plucked, trampled, dead in your dark bosom !  
 If at the heart of your mad glee  
 My living child lay lifelessly !  
 And all your horrible vampire life  
 With his precious blood were rife !  
 If your false innocence but rave  
 Over a murdered infant's grave !  
 And all his wondrous soul blown out,  
 Your idiot salt billows flout  
 My child's pale corpse within your cave !  
 And this the end of him who lent  
 Blue heaven to my dull firmament !  
 Of him, whose holy opening flower  
 Claimed eternity for dower !  
 Who from our green lowly sod  
 With wee white hands reached up to God,  
 Yea, talked familiarly with Him,  
 As with myself, ere earth grew dim  
 With his strange silence, and the loss  
 That stole from beauty all her gloss,  
 And charm for ever ! left the world  
 A faded mouldering banner furled,  
 Once thundering glorious, impearled,  
 Aflame with morning ! Mockery !  
 Break me ! or drown me ! let me die !  
 Curse your fair bodies with no heart !  
 Ah me ! Alas ! When I depart,

Shattered upon your iron rocks,  
 Stifed in wild water-shocks,  
 Shall I not find within the gloom,  
 There in the darkness of my doom,  
 A dewy dawn of one who left  
 Me moaning, when my heart was cleft ?—  
 A sweet auroral rising of my sun,  
 Who went out unaware, before his course  
 was run,  
 And I lay darkling ere my day was well  
 begun ?"

## III

But in a tone remonstrant, mild,  
 Like one who soothes a fevered child,  
 Methought fair Earth and Sky and Sea  
 Responded very quietly :  
 "Do you, then, our poor brother, ask  
 If all we wear the traitor's mask  
 On this our festival of gladness ?  
 We pity, pardoning, your madness !  
 He is not dead whom you so cherish !  
 How may a human spirit perish ?  
 Spirits ! ye dream a lovely dream,  
 And call it what we only deem !  
 Ye call us Nature : we are angels,  
 Who reveal profound evangels,  
 Tho' you may fathom not their glory,  
 Beholding, as in sacred story,  
 Men like trees walking : so God gives  
 Maturing sense to all that lives.  
 But once ye dwelt in Eden—then  
 We were gods who dwelt with men ;  
 Your antenatal sphere remember ;  
 Clear the earth-ash from the ember !  
 Spirits immortal ! all we live and move  
 In One, whose name is the Eternal Love.  
 Yea, with flame-clasp of suffering  
 Christ's own divine embraces cling !  
 Your little one is only gone up higher,  
 Burns now, and glows with more seraphic fire :  
 For this we bound him to the funeral pyre !  
 Yea, folded closer, closer to our breast,  
 His accents reach you from our radiant rest,  
 Mingling with ours ! Ah ! with sweet surprise  
 Awake ! and hear ! believe ! and recognise !"

SARK.

## THE TOY CROSS

MY little boy at Christmas-tide  
 Made me a toy cross ;  
 Two sticks he did, in boyish pride,  
 With brazen nail emboss.

Ah me ! how soon, on either side  
 His dying bed's true cross,  
 She and I were crucified,  
 Bemoaning our life-loss !

But He, whose arms in death spread wide  
 Upon the holy tree,  
 Were clasped about him when he died—  
 Clasped for eternity !

## AZRAEL

I WAS bending o'er my treasured infant,  
 O'er his infernal bed of pain ;  
 All my spirit cloven to its foundations,  
 Echoing his cries again,  
 They went crashing through my brain.  
 Till there came a hollow, hollow knocking  
 At my darling's lowly chamber door,  
 And my tortured heart sank fainting in me,  
 For I knew who stood before.  
 Then I beheld a dumb and dreadful Presence,  
 Shrouded in long rigid folds of grey,  
 Never daring to unveil its awful visage  
 Before the blessed day.  
 I, confronting, barred the lowly entrance ;  
 Yea, I flung my bleeding soul athwart.  
 I swore, "Thy touch shall ne'er pollute my  
 holy one  
 Till thou tread upon my heart !  
 Swift-souled he is, and pure, and fair, and  
 happy,  
 All his life yet pausing in the bud ;  
 He is mine eyes, the pulse of all my being,  
 Vital warmth, and dancing blood !  
 I have looked along the flowery vistas  
 Of his lovely paradisaal spring ;  
 I have mused, and seen myself beholding  
 His innocence upon the wing,

Flying in the freshly lilled alleys,  
 Blithely singing ever a sweet rhyme.  
 Wilt thou strike him dead before me? wilt  
 thou leave me  
 In blind silence for all time?  
 I shall look for long upon his opening beauty,  
 See the sail fill of his gallant youth,  
 Fair unsheathing of a generous keen spirit  
 Flashing eager for the Truth !  
 He shall defend us, and delight us old and  
 weary,  
 His poor weeping mother there and me !  
 Will it melt thee pondering how long and  
 dreary  
 Without him all our way will be?  
 How we longed and prayed and waited for  
 him !  
 And when, fairer than fond Hope could claim,  
 He arrived among us, how our hearts leapt  
 to him,  
 Blessing, loving, as he came !"

Falling prone, I grovelling entreated,  
 "Dreadful Deity ! for once be kind !"  
 But, implacable, It icily swept o'er me  
 A mighty moaning wind ;  
 And I saw my baby in Its drear embraces,  
 Rigid, cold, and silent, smitten dead.  
 Yet while I lay and impotently cursed It,  
 Methought, before It fled,  
 In place of Azrael, the awful angel,  
 When a fold fell from the countenance,  
 Methought I saw, O miracle ! the Saviour,  
 With a world's love in His glance !  
 I beheld divinely human eyes of Jesus,  
 Unfathomable seas of sorrowing ;  
 I saw, like flame, upon the riven forehead  
 His martyr-crown of King !  
 "Pardon, Lord !" I cried. "Oh, take my  
 darling !"  
 Looking in His face, methought He smiled.  
 Ere they vanished, in the empty chamber  
 kneeling,  
 I yielded Him my child.  
 And I felt a little babe may on a stranger  
 For a while a fondling joy confer,  
 Yet if he hear the low tone of his mother,  
 He will bound away to her.

Were we high and pure enough to be the  
 guardians  
 Of a heavenly soul so pure and high?  
 God, who lent our bird out of His bosom,  
 Recalls him to the sky!  
 If He brought him to us, He can keep him  
 Safer than our foolish feeble care;  
 It is very blind of us to weep him  
 Removed from our sad air,  
 Moved to where the holy ones are telling  
 In pure white lilies the Lord's love,  
 Where amaranth and asphodel a dwelling  
 Weave around our dove,  
 Full of wisdom, full of love!

Was it very, very lonely, O my darling!  
 Very lonely for a little child,  
 Whom we cherished so, and guarded in his  
 goings,  
 Carried from us to the wild,  
 When thy dear bewildered eyes looked back  
 upon us,  
 And we longed in vain to keep thee, or to  
 follow,  
 Longed for glimpses of thee disappearing  
 In the gloomy, guilty hollow?  
 Ah! if we had seen thee, with companions  
 Coming forth to meet thee with a smile;  
 For there are to whom the beatific vision  
 Hath been granted otherwhile,  
 While they weeping stood deserted on the  
 desert,  
 And love was borne o'er wan waves far away!  
 Yet the Lord of life and death is ever near us,  
 If we go, or if we stay.  
 Lo! the same mild moon upon the wanderer  
 Looks, and on the dweller by the hearth;  
 So the mild large Eye of the All-Father  
 Wards all worlds, and earth,  
 Raining a sweet influence of spirits,  
 For no malignant ray can harm the pure:  
 It was Jesus, and the gentle saints departed,  
 Who came his wound to cure;  
 On their gentle bosom how secure!

If I only knew how I shall behold him,  
 When and where, and in what happy guise!  
 Will he be a child when I enfold him?  
 Or will the form change as he grows more wise?

He will ever be a child in his sweet spirit!  
 And I deem the very form will never die;  
 But ah! the soul slides where she holds no  
 image!  
 Reels, nor grasps reality!  
 If I were only sure of his well-being,  
 Sure as I am sure of anguish here,  
 Could I wish him in our foul, infected prison,  
 Away from his pure air?

Ah! Thy merciless, stern mercy hath  
 chastised us,  
 Goading us along the narrow road;  
 Thy bird, who warmed and dazzled us a  
 moment,  
 Hath returned to Thine abode.  
 Lord, when we are purged within the furnace,  
 May we have our little child again?  
 All Thine anguish by the olives in the Garden,  
 All Thy life and death are vain,  
 If Thou yield us not our own again!

## A SOUTHERN SPRING CAROL

O SPRING! O Spring! O Southern Spring!  
 What a triumphal song you sing!  
 All the valley sings!  
 Nor only warblers who have wings;  
 All the peach and almond blossom  
 Seems young carol from their bosom  
 In the form of flowers,  
 Wandering every way  
 On many a spray,  
 Rills in the blue day,  
 Very bird-notes in a spray,  
 Filling all the valley.  
 And I deem that, as they dally  
 In the summer light intense,  
 In the deep Italian blue,  
 A subtle spirit influence  
 May re-enchnt them to a dew  
 Of melody pure-hearted,  
 Hither and thither parted,  
 From the bosom of the birds,  
 From the gaily feathered herds,  
 And they would be songs again,  
 One rich rain!  
 A peach-petal flutters down,  
 A white moth hath softly flown,

And we hardly know sweet note  
 From fair vision as they float.  
 All the valley sings !  
 An angel kindles when he dips  
 The fig's candelabra tips  
 To chrysolite, while many a vine  
 Amorously will incline  
 O'er vistas of a golden trellis,  
 Where a cool and shadowy well is,  
 All overgrown with mosses wet  
 And maiden-hair and violet.  
 O'er many a shrine  
 Roses twine !  
 Light green fountains of the palm  
 Fall in a blue crystal calm ;  
 Delicate flushing lady tulips  
 Close their lanceolate dim dew-lips,  
 Their soft satiny repose  
 By a light hand flecked with rose ;  
 Golden jonquils, white narcissus,  
 Whisper softly, "Come, and kiss us !  
 Part us not from the sweet brood  
 Of our companions in the wood !"  
 Earth's fair features, every one  
 Instinct with spirit of the sun,  
 Radiate well-married hues,  
 Blent with air and ocean blues.  
 Verily I seem to stand  
 In a realm of fairyland,  
 Or I take my dazzled station  
 In some intense illumination  
 Of a missal mediæval  
 Yonder on the hill's upheaval,  
 Where we hear the convent chime,  
 Wrought by monk of olden time,  
 Whom the cloister heard intone,  
 And many a sun-bleached river stone,  
 Or the darkling cypress cone.  
 Cool grey clouds of olive fill  
 All the foldings of the hill,  
 While fair dawn-empetalled peaches  
 Gleam athwart the bloomy reaches  
 Of quiet harebell-mantled mountain  
 Gemmed with rivulet or fountain,  
 Shadowy evening robes, whose hem  
 Shines with many a water gem :  
 While rich oranges all golden,  
 In a darkling foliage holden,

Are a foil to the pale gleaming  
 Of oval lemon, and the beaming  
 Ampler cherry trees, one snow  
 Of blossom in the fading glow !  
 In pale blue evening,  
 Ah ! the cherry seems to sing,  
 With a fairy bridal dower !  
 Pure white chalices of flower,  
 Pendent in a pale blue sky,  
 Shadowy blossom with soft eye !  
 Dimlit amber mysteries  
 We faint surmise,  
 Where bees hover,  
 And a soft moth-lover !  
 Oh, I would that I might know  
 The secret of your bridal snow,  
 Soul of the pure ecstasy  
 Softly haunting a grey sky,  
 With such a grace  
 Of spirit-lace !  
 For it seems a happy ghost  
 From the seraph host !  
 Never bride dissolved in love,  
 Never saint in realms above,  
 Nor lark on his own music tost,  
 Hath more joy than this, embossed,  
 Shadowy, rare,  
 On pale blue air ;  
 White cloud a-flower,  
 A very shower  
 Of still rapture unalloyed,  
 Too overjoyed  
 For sound of singing !  
 All the valley sings !  
 A clear rivulet is flinging  
 Warbled song to the pure air,  
 Laughing, a young infant fair,  
 Ruffling softly, swiftly passes  
 Green-illuminated among grasses,  
 Or red anemone to wander,  
 Where are violet, germander ;  
 Child pursued in play, to ramble,  
 After such a sweet preamble,  
 Among myrtle bowers and bramble.  
 Green-pennoned canebrakes in the river  
 All around grey arches quiver ;  
 While westering Apollo dulls  
 Delved loam, and vivid pulse,

A swart red-vestured toiler waters  
 From rills, who are the river's daughters.  
 All the valley sings!  
 And rings, and rings!  
 Ah! Nature never would have power  
 To breathe such ecstasy of flower,  
 Vernal songs of happy birds,  
 The young rill's delicious words,  
 No iris hues might bring to birth,  
 No heart were hers for any mirth,  
 If he were turned to common earth!  
 If a child so fair, so good,  
 Were a waif on Lethe's flood,  
 If a soul-source of feeling, seeing,  
 Were blotted from the realms of being!  
 She from all delight would start,  
 With such a horror at her heart,  
 She would reel dissolved, and faint  
 With deep dishonour of the taint!  
 The very girders of her hall  
 Crushed, her stately floor would fall.  
 Ourselves are the foundation stone;  
 If thought fail, the world is gone;  
 All were ruined, wanting one.  
 But all the valley sings!  
 Nature rises on immortal wings!  
 And soaring, lo! she sings! she sings!  
     There is no death!  
     She saith.

O Spring! O Spring! O Southern Spring!  
 What a triumphal song you sing!

VALLEY OF TAGGIA, 1880.

### ALL SAINTS, AND ALL SOULS

THY birthday is All Saints' Day, my sweet  
 treasure.

Ah! well it may be!  
 For on us there descended in full measure  
 All saints in one celestial pleasure,  
     With thee, dear baby!  
 For thou wert open, loyal, fearless,  
     Ah me! forsaken!  
 Radiant soul in raiment peerless,  
 A private joy to thee how cheerless,  
     Until partaken!

It is All Saints' Day; on the morrow,  
     With flowers offered,  
 Sons and daughters of dark sorrow  
 Some faint ray of peace may borrow  
     From flowers proffered  
 On green mounds of the departed,  
     Meekly saying  
 To sweet souls of the true-hearted,  
 "May we not for long be parted,  
     Here delaying!"  
 There a friend, a sister, mother,  
     Fondly kneeling,  
 Sobs and tears are fain to smother,  
 Unto the dear sundered other  
     Self appealing,  
 "Leave me not alone, O lover!  
     Child I cherish!"  
 "May the reign of love be over?  
 Death is only sent to prove her!  
     May she perish?"  
 In warm-breathing blue ethereal  
     White tapers kindled  
 Shyly waver, souls aerial,  
 In all-beholding strength imperial  
     Of Day dwindled,  
 Like our lives in the universal  
     Sun of spirit;  
 Hark how ocean makes rehearsal  
 Of a life without reversal  
     All inherit!  
 An eternal child, blue Ocean,  
     Rhythmic breathing  
 O'er the dead, with grand emotion,  
 And blue hills with deep devotion  
     Hearts are wreathing.  
 We are sure they are not sleeping  
     Beneath our blossom,  
 By white marble we may, weeping,  
 Plant for memory, but keeping  
     Near our bosom  
 Life's own vigil o'er us, even  
     As in dreaming  
 O'er what seems their sleep, bereaven,  
 We hold our vigil; they in heaven  
     Know no seeming!

SAN REMO.

## VISION OF THE NIGHT

A SOFT young moon among the trees  
 Nor lights the valley-side, nor these ;  
 Only faint illumines a hill  
 Far over me, where pale and still  
 A fane 'mid habitations fair,  
 Gemmed with mild fires, inhabits air  
 Of clear May midnight ; nightingales  
 Lull the lonely-lying vales ;  
 Living stars above are set,  
 As in adoration met.  
 Yon hill appears a holy hope,  
 Far beyond our earthly scope,  
 Ghostly gleaming in the cope  
 Of heaven, revealed, anon withdrawn.  
 But I have felt the vision dawn,  
 Hallowing my lonely lawn.  
 So I may wait, tho' all be gloom,  
 Till the eternal day illumine.

CERIANA.

## IN LONDON

THE mighty towers of Westminster  
 Loom beneath me in murky air,  
 While a vast expanse of street  
 Echoes to loud-hurrying feet  
 Of men and horses, and swift wheels,  
 Where a clanging steeple peals,  
 Where he, who with deep feeling cons  
 The souls of animals, in bronze  
 Wrought majestic lion forms,  
 Brooding, slumbering, dark storms,  
 Symbols of our England's power,  
 Whose dread lightnings brood and glower,  
 Like those fulvous eyes ; their claws  
 Are death, hid sheathed in vasty paws.  
 On the lion a child gazes ;  
 Grave brown wondering eyes he raises  
 To the form : compelled to leave,  
 With all my sight to him I cleave  
 In departing ; often since  
 As from a sickening stroke I wince,

Journeying by the very place  
 Where I beheld his little face  
 Pondering on the mighty beast,  
 More than all to me, though least,  
 Seeing now through tear-suffusion  
 Without him all the loud confusion !

Once again the living creatures,  
 With their weary sullen features,  
 I behold behind the bars,  
 Where the den's dull limit mars  
 All wild splendour of their pride,  
 Abates the grandeur of their stride.  
 Bondage tames the fervid eyes,  
 As night doth the torrid skies,  
 To a lurid sultriness,  
 Clouded o'er with vague distress ;  
 Emblems of our human race,  
 Fallen from their lofty place,  
 Blind, bewildered, bound within  
 By the manacles of sin !

With a glad and grave surprise  
 The terror of their gleaming eyes  
 He considers, mirthful mime  
 Of them in a little time.  
 Again I view the elephant,  
 Slow-pacing in his wonted haunt,  
 On whose tall, broad, howdah'd back  
 The child and I along the track  
 Three years ago swung, full of glee—  
 Now the child is not with me !

When our wild praying seemed to stir  
 God's awful executioner,  
 Whose blank, set countenance faint quavered,  
 Whose dull resolve a moment wavered,  
 And when sweet life seemed to repel  
 Death's white horror, it befell  
 That when he would descend the stair,  
 Patient he paused for one to bear  
 Him feeble, and I filled the want ;  
 So he named me his elephant.

Passing through the gay arcade,  
 Where toys for children are displayed,  
 Anon I pause before a toy,  
 Dreaming how a little boy

Will lighten mirth from his dear face  
If I buy it—for a space  
Unremembering my home  
Without him is but blind and dumb!  
His sacred toys lie idle now;  
O'er them the pale anguished brow  
Of Love's forlorn despair we bend,  
Hoping life's dull pain may end;  
Till anon some organ sounds  
In the street, but no glad bounds  
Of a child's light feet we note  
Run to hear the music float,  
Climb upon a chair to see  
Dancing dolls' bedizened glee,  
Or the monkey's mimicry.

What shall I do? . . . Full many others,  
Little ones who seem his brothers,  
Take delight in things like these!  
Do they ail, or doth the breeze  
Of pleasure ripple o'er their faces,  
I will contemplate their graces;  
I will be a minister  
The fountain of their joy to stir,  
In such resorts, and by such measures,  
As were wont to yield him pleasures;  
Or where little hearts may ail,  
Love's yoke-fellow, I will not fail,  
Where are tears and visage pale,  
To quell the tyranny of Fate,  
Or man, that renders desolate:  
And I deem he will approve  
In the bowers of holy Love,  
Near and nearer to me move.  
Ours, how weak soe'er, be strife,  
On the holy side of life!  
How loud soe'er the world may roar,  
We know Love will be conqueror!

"THE SEA SHALL GIVE UP  
HER DEAD"

TIME spake to me: "Behold!  
I slay your dearest one!  
And with him, dead beneath the churchyard  
mould,  
Your living heart I bury from the sun!"

More scornfully he said:  
"When you have anguished long,  
I will erase remembrance of your dead:  
You shall arise, singing an idle song,  
As were you glad again;  
For you were glad of yore!  
New circumstance, new care, shall cause to  
wane  
His very image, till your eyes no more  
Behold him in the deep  
Dark mere of memory;  
Although you peer therein, and wail and weep,  
You shall but find a vacant, smiling sky;  
Till with faint listless wonder you espy  
Wan, withered Love, who falters there to die!  
Even from your heart's shrine  
Your idol shall be torn;  
As erst your joys, so now your sorrows fine  
I scatter with cold scorn!  
All ye shall jeer at your own oath  
Of infinite fidelity;  
Ye shall forswear yourselves, and be to both  
Heaven and earth, and your own selves a  
mockery!  
Poor fool! I will extinguish every ember,  
Love, hope, grief, all remaining of you yet!  
Yea, though thou vow to God thou wilt  
remember,  
Thou shalt forget!"

And I replied to Time:  
"Thou shalt abolish me,  
Ere thou dissolve all sanctities sublime  
Of mine own being; when I perish utterly,  
I moan no more in pain, nor lie foredone,  
Self-scorned, a hissing to white orbs that roll,  
Flawless, annealed, obedient to their sun.  
If thou hast plunged in night his precious soul,  
How wilt thou hinder me  
From taking sanctuary  
In that eternal gloom from woe and shame?  
A holiest Altar, if the child who was all free  
from blame  
Be lying mute before  
The dim grey stone of Silence, cold for ever-  
more!  
Ah! there I shall be free  
From pain, from sin, from folly, and from thee!"

There he and I shall rest in peace,  
Nor know what may be born, nor what may  
    cease,  
Nor any God may torture us with false hopes  
    of release !"

I spake again to Time :  
"Thou liest in thy throat !  
All may change, or fall, or climb,  
Yet all lives self-retained in change, tho'  
    never so remote.  
Yea, the old form I knew  
Abideth out of view,  
Now first fulfilled in other,  
For each is by a brother ;  
In some alien guise  
The dead are risen ; lo ! to longing eyes,  
When Occasion calls aloud  
To the Past within the shroud,  
When Destiny, the omnipotent, shall wave  
Her hand, the Past shall start from his deep  
    grave,  
And Memory restore  
What seemed in wan Oblivion buried ever-  
    more,  
Sea that moans for human ravage, ever  
    hungering for more !  
All abideth in a sphere  
Aloof from mortal eye and ear ;  
Faith discerns in flowing time  
Fair reflex of a holier clime,  
In ruffled mirrors of dark memory  
The still face of Eternity.  
Yea, and every tiny sprout  
Of bloom or leaf is yonder still,  
Though many a wind may waft us doubt,  
And they play hide and seek at will  
In the spirit's fairy fountain,  
From holy halls of night divine so musically  
    mounting !

"Doth not the aged man recover  
What seemed long perished of his primal  
    youth ?  
Once more he is the child, the blithe boy-  
    lover,  
Who lay concealed below life's lavish later  
    growth.

And though the soul bewildered err from life  
    to life,  
She shall possess them all in God, afar from  
    mortal strife !

"Oft on me in dream  
My blessed one will gleam,  
All palpable as when at first  
He quenched my spirit's longing thirst ;  
I fold him close, I feel him kiss,  
I feel his hands, his hair ; the bliss  
No fuller was of yore,  
And asking for no more,  
I thank the Lord for this.  
Howbeit I clasp him closer than of old,  
As if I knew I only may enfold  
For a brief moment, dim divining why,  
Foreboding him compelled anon to fly.  
Troubled I own that somewhat seems  
    amiss,  
And nor asleep nor waking may I unravel  
    this !  
Often I am aware that he hath died,  
And yet I hold him living by my side.  
Enough ! he gleams upon my lonely tomb,  
Among stern crags, from wan night-clouds,  
    he gloweth in my gloom !"

Nature reveals high lineaments of souls,  
Confused from sad suffusion of our eyes,  
Veiled with our tears ; in these poor earthly  
    shoals  
Of low-lapsed life, she may not wear the  
    guise  
She wore when we were innocent and  
    wise.  
And while I muse, the cold tremendous  
    Shade,  
Who spake the cruel words, appears to  
    fade.  
I know Time for a shadow of man's mind  
Thrown on the wide world ; human souls  
    are blind ;  
And lo ! the Lord is shining from behind !  
Ah ! strengthen, purge our eyes ! we would  
    behold Thy day !  
Then error, wrong, and sorrow shall vanish  
    all away !

AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

MORNING

I MUSE at dawn upon the heights alone.  
A wakeful awe of silence reigns around ;  
The pines are hushed, no bird breathes any sound.

The mountains are a symphony, whose tone,  
Piled in the expanse of memory, hath grown  
Slow-reared ; they seem to heave before mine eyes

From deep, dark glens, to clear auroral skies,  
In billowy gradation, from the bowed  
Low notes of dusky lowlands to the loud  
Pæan of gratulation that is blown  
Heavenward from awful summits fraught  
with morn,

One fiery snow ! Upon the craggy surge,  
Rude rocky village eyries are upborne  
Over bleak umber plains ; from verge to verge  
The higher hills that neighbour them have worn

For ages the pine forest vast and grave :  
Nature arises from Death's cold engulfing wave.

Fair facing these, in Morn's unearthly smile,

O'er purple Main's horizon, lo ! a snowy-mountained isle !

In soft air's primrose,

A violet-flushing rose.

Shadowy gleaming island ! art thou solid strand,

Or pageant of cloudland ?

In memory's far world a visionary pile ?

Some dear dream beyond our scope

In heavenlier realms of faith or hope ?

When will our wings, or fair El-Sirat come,

And we fly home ?

Of musing faith and prayer, of love and lofty deed,

A very iris-arch to heaven is wrought,

Till from the spirit falls her homely weed,

And white wings wave where otherwhile was nought

Of star-yfraught !

Psyche lost her wings ! from death, and wrong, and pain,  
Behold ! they are born again ;  
So these are very gain.

Near heights, transfigured in ethereal,  
Essential glory, burn purpureal.  
Fair ample Morn, in silence o'er the sea,  
Opens her shrine, her sanctuary of bloom,  
To ocean's billowy pure foam,  
Unfolds unfathomable blossom,  
Reveals the subtle secret of her bosom,  
Pours from a crystal urn  
Heavenly hues love-born,  
Till Day's archangel, pulsing radiancy,  
Swiftly emerging from the deep's grey pall,  
A flower of fire ascends, and floating free,  
Winged with intolerable splendour, soars imperially !  
Then all the vibrant ocean blazeth,  
And his grand blinding glory praiseth.

But thou, O Sun ! dost never die,  
Nor ascend on high !  
Earth, whene'er she turns away,  
Deems there is a death of Day.

Herbs wake to fragrance ; flowers from soft dream ;

A myriad hearts pour forth their orison

At thy sublime epiphany, O solemn-soaring Sun !

Yet thou, fair Light Supreme,

To these who feel thy beam,

Art but a moon-pale shadow of the Eternal One !

Thou mighty living Soul, in whom we live and move,

Feedest upon the fire divine of spiritual Love.

NOON

Now at full noon a silver silence reigns ;  
The pines are fragrant, and the mountain thyme ;

Nor bee nor bird-song the still light contains ;  
Sunned sober fir forests descend or climb ;

Blue skies arch over blue inclining seas.  
 Midway beneath me, girt with leafy gold,  
 A brown old convent in a nest of trees  
 Tranquil abides; yon lowly shadows fold  
 Thee, dearest daughter, sweet companion!  
 Far cloven crags, a pale grey brotherhood,  
 Dream in the azure, phantoms tall and wan,  
 Bounding a billowy waste of solitude,  
 Brown rolling realms of desert shadow-stained  
 From slow white cloud; yon height of sombre  
 form,  
 For all day's rich caresses, hath retained  
 His lonely gloom, broods o'er the night  
 enorm  
 Of his own shadow whelming the wide earth.

Now in deep stillness, as of calm white  
 death,  
 What wraith of dubious low sound hath birth  
 As from another world? slow wins more  
 breath?

May it be mellow sound of some far bell  
 From a far hamlet on far height? But why  
 Do the dear airs bear him I love so well,  
 The image of my lost, who ever nigh  
 My heart abides, more close against me, so  
 That I behold him, and he seems to call  
 In these low melodies that faintly flow,  
 And float upon blue waves aerial?  
 His own sweet self thrills memory; her hall,  
 Dark as a tomb, glows warm; the cloudy  
 pall

Exhales; he wears fair flowers for a dress,  
 Pure outbirth of a child's meek holiness!  
 His own sweet self haunts memory!  
 Who but he,  
 When I remember, thrilleth me  
 Out of his own eternity?  
 The dead, the distant, all are with us still;  
 Yea, they may be more with us if we will,  
 For deepening our roots, and branching  
 higher,  
 Illusions shrivel in God's unconsuming fire,  
 And we find one another  
 Where is no death to hide, no mortal life to  
 smother,  
 But spirits lie awake, and one, upon their  
 mighty Mother!

## EVENING

Now, pearl-grey ocean blent with opal skies,  
 We know no more dim airs from aery main;  
 In smooth clear mirrors a winged vessel lies,  
 While many a slender purple ocean-stain  
 Hangs like a cloud; the shallop in still even  
 Seems a white sail slow sailing up to heaven;  
 A ghostly glow receives it; lo! it fades,  
 Unbodied, in the heart of ever-deepening  
 shades!

SAN REMOLO.

## DEATH

DEATH is very beautiful,  
 Solemn, pure, and calm,  
 As in a shadowy cloister cool  
 A lowly murmured psalm  
 After some fierce battle-cry  
 In the windy glare hard by.  
 Nay, very terrible is death!  
 A cold, white shape of fear;  
 By it we talk with bated breath,  
 As if the thing could hear.  
 So like, and so unlike the face!  
 Ah! why borrow their dear grace?  
 Nay! thou cold mockery of life!  
 Death, take any other guise!  
 If they with living joy be rife,  
 Why looks their image on this wise?  
 Why make us deem they turn to *this*,  
 Who were the pulse of all our bliss?  
 Death is Satan's cruel jest,  
 His blaspheming parody!  
 "Lo! I give your darling rest;  
 Come and see him by-and-by!  
 Kiss the unanswering icy stone,  
 And know thyself alone, alone!  
 My repose is long and deep,  
 Not a passing earthly sleep."

Nay! this hath some inner sense;  
 I would resolve the mystery;  
 'Tis but a symbol of intense  
 Unwearying life for these who die.

Lord! may we wake to see Thy face,  
 And our beloved in Thine embrace?  
 We dream a dream of cold white death,  
 And all our being shuddereth.  
 Ah! when may we interpret, Lord,  
 The meaning of Thy mystic Word?

Death is very pitiful,  
 Death for a dear child!  
 A pure white bud some wanton pull  
 Scatters on the wild!  
 And yet one woe may deeper move,  
 The dying and the death of Love!  
 He seemed so amiable, so fair,  
 All holy, a perennial youth!  
 Dumb and stark he lieth there;  
 God Himself may weep for ruth.  
 "Dear Love, perchance, may not be dead,  
 Only sleeping," some one said.

Ah! death is very beautiful,  
 Solemn, pure, and calm,  
 As in a shadowy cloister cool  
 A holy chanted psalm  
 After some fierce battle-cry  
 In the windy glare hard by,  
 Singing, "We are saved from evil,  
 From the wandering waves' upheaval,  
 Folded far from very death,  
 Wherein the spirit withereth."

### GUARDIAN ANGELS OF CHILDREN

VERILY their angels  
 Ever behold the face  
 Of our Eternal Father,  
 Sunned in His full grace.  
 Yet in the stormless sunshine  
 They do not love to dwell;  
 There is no place in heaven  
 They love half so well  
 As the lowly chamber  
 Of a little child;  
 Dearer to them the breathing  
 Of his bosom mild

Than are all the pæans  
 Round about the throne,  
 Scorning the cold splendour  
 Of an idle crown.  
 Love rears her radiant palace  
 In our shadow-world of fears,  
 She mourns by our dark ocean  
 Of tempestuous tears!  
 Angels tend the children  
 Waking or asleep,  
 They rebuke the evil,  
 Who have made them weep.  
 Heaven's crystal glory gloweth  
 Rainbow'd as they fly  
 To where earth's night, illumined  
 In their sweet charity,  
 Dawneth silently!

In the lordly castle,  
 In the dungeon deep,  
 In the lonely hovel,  
 Love-vigil they keep.  
 Fair be the children, cherished,  
 Sweethearted, rosed with health,  
 Or poor and starved, and wanting  
 The soul's holier wealth,  
 Inheritors of sorrow,  
 By leaguering ills deformed,  
 Plague-smitten soul and body,  
 Poor hearts love never warmed,—  
 With all the angels tarry;  
 And though the fire be low,  
 They will fan the ember  
 To a living glow;  
 Inhabiting our sorrow,  
 Our chilled heart of wrong,  
 Until it yield, and mellow  
 Bloom to a sweet song.  
 They, knowing our mortal fever  
 Soon will pass away,  
 Through long nights of sorrow  
 Calm await the Day.  
 Asleep they lead the lambkins  
 To meadows of sweet dream;  
 In gentle arms they bear them  
 By many a cooling stream;  
 Where the sunbeams cherish

White and yellow flowers,  
 They may sail on silver  
 Among fairy bowers,  
 Losing all the terror  
 Of our waking world,  
 Sails of their frail shallop  
 In flowery havens furled.

A poor boy rides the pony  
 So wistfully admired,  
 While a poor maiden nurses  
 The doll richly attired ;  
 They feel no more so tired !  
 Pains and griefs no longer  
 Vex the innocent breast,  
 Now dear angels lull them  
 Into such deep rest !  
 Cruel faces vanish,  
 And all the loveless waste,  
 In a fair home they find them,  
 Tenderly embraced.

And when we deem them dying,  
 More life the Lord imparts,  
 Their faint frail breath subsideth  
 On warm angel hearts  
 Like a wavelet failing  
 On a sand so fair :  
 Ah ! then the angels welcome  
 Heaven's cloudless crystal air !  
 Because of the frail snowflake  
 Their kind bosoms wear.  
 The snowflake melts in glory,  
 The little child awakes ;  
 Under the smiles of Jesus,  
 Death-frozen for our sakes,  
 There are no more snowflakes !  
 With our snows bejewelled  
 How the angels shine,  
 Earth's frozen flower a sunlet  
 Pulsing light divine !

Dear babes, help one another !  
 All the saints help you :  
 We are with them in heaven,  
 Doing as they do.  
 Every cross of sorrow  
 Is a blessed pain ;  
 The Lord Jesus bore it,  
 Proving it pure gain.

## LAST VICTIMS FROM THE WRECK OF THE *PRINCESS ALICE*

### I

Two little bodies, from the tide  
 Last gathered, lie alone ;  
 No father maddens by the side  
 Of Love turned into stone ;  
 No mother weeps here for her pride,  
 Her joy for ever flown.  
 They were all innocence and mirth,  
 Warm light of loving eyes ;  
 They are defiled and ruined earth,  
 The passing stranger flies.  
 The twain who watched them warmly curled,  
 Asleep with locks of gold,  
 Felt that for them the whole wide world  
 Nestled there aureoled.  
 And now they lie unknown, unnamed,  
 In London's awful roar ;  
 Over them piteous, unclaimed  
 Oblivion's dust will pour,  
 Love's eyes look never more !  
 There is no silver sound, no speech,  
 Although they rest so nigh,  
 No rosy, dimpled hands impleach  
 In slumber tranquilly.  
 From the close clasp of loving arms,  
 From heedless holiday,  
 Hurl'd upon death's dire alarms,  
 And to uncared-for clay !

### II

Are they indeed unknown, unnamed ?  
 Is any life spilt water ?  
 In the lone universe unclaimed !  
 Souls for mad Chance to slaughter !  
 Have they no mother, and no father ?  
 In all the worlds no friend ?  
 Are they a dim, grey dust ? . . . or rather,  
 Did our Eternal Parent send  
 Fair shining cohorts of His grace,  
 Strong children of His love,  
 Who minister before His face,  
 Swift-thronging from above,

To gather them from forth the gloom,  
 Long ere men found their forms?  
 To shield them in the shock of doom,  
 While heavenliest ardour warms  
 With emulation every breast!  
 All will be first to hold,  
 To lull the frightened babes to rest  
 In their maternal fold!  
 There leaned both sire and mother lost,  
 Dawning on the dim gaze;  
 And many sealed in death's deep frost,  
 Fathers of former days,  
 Thronged all the approaches of God's throne,  
 While Christ arose above,  
 Smiling a welcome to His own  
 Babe brethren of His love.  
 . . . Yet ah! the hideous prospect whirls;  
 Death-slumber seems profound;  
 With ghastly gleams the river swirls  
 Blindly above the drowned!  
 . . . Nay, but the children are awake,  
 Although we hear them not;  
 Our dear ones their sweet prattle make  
 In some fair, far cot.  
 I deem our life is a red flame  
 Of purgatorial fire;  
 And Death, God's calm white angel, came  
 From the Eternal Sire,  
 To lay cool hands before their eyes,  
 Shadowing from the glare,  
 And in profound tranquillities  
 To hide from our despair.

One pure white Light is over all,  
 One Spirit-Pulse serene,  
 Who when we rise, and when we fall,  
 Unmoved approves the scene.  
 For Love is Lord from Heaven to Hell,  
 Walks our red waves of sorrow;  
 Love weeps beside us; all is well;  
 Day will dawn to-morrow.  
 Love weeps beside us, and within  
 Love moaneth for our lot;  
 Behold! his vassals, Death and Sin,  
 Chained to his chariot!  
 Love sleeps not, throned indifferent  
 Upon a lordly scorn;  
 He is the Man, whose brows are rent  
 With sorrow's crown of thorn.

God is the God-forsaken Man;  
 He is the Little Child;  
 His eyes with human woes are wan;  
 And all is reconciled!

### CHILDREN AND THE WOODS

I LOVE the beautiful green woodland,  
 Where shy singing-fairies flit;  
 In the twilight of their foodland  
 I hear a tapping while I sit,  
 And deem it is the woodpecker,  
 Yet know not other elfin noises  
 That waking near me softly stir,  
 While a shadowy bough faint poises,  
 Dreamily athwart the beryl  
 Of sensitive sun-lighted leaves;  
 And breathlessly, as in play-peril,  
 The laughing rillet swiftly cleaves  
 A way through trees and flowers who love him,  
 Waving green arms while he flows,  
 With touch light hindering above him,  
 As they would kiss him while he goes,  
 But he merrily from them flows,  
 Blessing the green twilit heart,  
 As erst to mine my little one would songful  
 light impart!

Ah! now my fairy brook is dry;  
 Where are the playful gleamings of his eye,  
 Or songs of his sweet innocent revelry?  
 But while I love the gentle woodland,  
 And fragrant pines that stir and sing  
 Hushfully in upland valleys,  
 Blue lakes, and every living thing,  
 I love the little human children  
 Better than all woods and flowers,  
 The music of their innocent gambols  
 More than springs and summer showers.  
 And my heart is never lonely  
 If in roving I may meet  
 A few little children only  
 With their merrily flying feet,  
 In the playfield fresh from school,  
 Or among glades of woodland cool.  
 They are fair meanings of the daylight,  
 Clear fulfilment of meek flowers,  
 All a shyly wandering faylight  
 Would say among her leafy bowers.

In their sweet, shy, sidelong glances,  
 And every lisping word that wells,  
 In their light aerial dances,  
 As of wind-waved lily-bells . . .  
 I think I hear *his* very tone,  
 I feel his very living smile ;  
 Yea, one would say he lends his own  
 To these fair children for a while.  
 Dear Father, these are very fair !  
 Lovely in all their ways,  
 Whose every breathing is a prayer,  
 And all their motion praise.  
 Then a gleam steals o'er the snow  
 Of my low-responding breast,  
 Even as a faint afterglow  
 Dawns in the ever-faded west.  
 And so God gives all babes to me,  
 In place of Baby who is gone ;  
 Yet ah ! the whole fair human family  
 Weighs lighter than my little one !

#### OLD SCENES REVISITED

AH ! the dear old moorland path,  
 Consecrate by tiny feet !  
 Every nook and corner hath  
 A remembrance bitter-sweet.  
 Three long years, all winter, scenes  
 Afar have held me, many a care,  
 But my heart for ever leans  
 Here, until from elsewhere  
 My feet are carried to the place  
 Where dawned on me thy blessed face,  
 The holy moor where Love was born,  
 The moor where Love left me forlorn.  
 There is night upon the moor,  
 There is night upon my heart ;  
 A low moon consoles the moor,  
 And his memory my heart.  
 All is redolent of him ;  
 Here to us from heaven he came,  
 Loosed here many a merry whim,  
 Joy sparkling o'er the fountain brim  
 Of his white spirit ; here the flame  
 Of Love's own life burned holily  
 On the moorland ; his birth-name  
 The heather gave him ; home to die

Amid the heath he journeyed ; here  
 His baby form, that was so dear,  
 The lovely form we loved so well,  
 Lies under the heather-bell.

I think my ghost will haunt the place,  
 Even when I behold thy face  
 Glassed in some celestial lake,—  
 I love it so for thy dear sake.  
 But ah ! if we were only sure !  
 Were only seeing thee secure,  
 Even afar off, now and then,  
 I were the happiest of men !

Aspens whisper in grey air,  
 Whisper as they whispered when,  
 Playing among them blithe and fair,  
 He drew my soul from a dark den  
 Of dismal shadows with his song ;  
 Whisper like a gentle throng  
 Of spirits murmuring " Rejoice !"  
 To me, who faint for his dear voice,  
 Wandering ever in the wild  
 Till I find my little child,  
 Him to feel and hear and see,  
 Who cannot wholly perished be !  
 Somewhen, somewhere, the wan stem of  
 endeavour  
 Shall flower in vision, radiant for ever !  
 Ah ! may I not thy semblance find  
 In the low light, or the low wind ?  
 Do I not yearn to clasp thy ghost,  
 My own beloved, O my lost ?  
 Thee, thee, thee only do I want,  
 The very little child was mine ;  
 Refuse me him for whom I pant,  
 God, Virtue, Heaven, I resign !  
 And surely in the dim pinewood,  
 Or in the garden where he leapt,  
 In the enchanted solitude  
 Under the window where he slept,  
 If anywhere within the bound  
 Of worldwide being he hath breath,  
 Is it not here he may be found,  
 Loosed from the monster fold of Death,  
 Safe from the hunger of dim Death ?  
 Under the window where he slept,  
 Or in the day-time danced and sang

With his boy brother, where we wept  
Hot tears of blood for his death-pang,  
His long, long pain! and where he lay,  
White lilies o'er him, the king-lily,  
Moonpale and cold, who was the day,  
Will he not come now, pure and stilly,  
And touch, and whisper "Father mine,  
I am not dead, dead; it is I!"  
Like Jesus, when He saw them pine  
So for Him after Calvary?

Yea, voices call to me, my love,  
In twilight, and they name thy name!  
Alas! I am not sure, my dove,  
If they be thine! they do not seem the same!  
And in my dreams they whisper still,  
Often they seem to sob and moan,  
That I may not, for all my will,  
Surely know them for thine own:  
I deem they may be demon hosts who jeer,  
Maddening mortals with false hope and fear.  
So rather I return within,  
Afar from sense-deluding din;  
By the upheaval of my being  
Attain to realms of clearer seeing,  
Find thy very self by faith,  
High o'er the welter of dim death,  
Throned o'er mists of mortal strife  
In luminous airs of ampler life.  
Death is a shadow of our fall;  
But ah! how many a heavier pall  
Hangs o'er dead souls! Oblivion!  
Discord! all monster growths that overrun  
Man's inner vision, veiling from the Sun,  
And with His Light of life confounding all!

O my own baby boy! my child!  
Thou art the Father of my soul!  
In thee the Lord, the Undeified,  
Came on earth to make me whole.  
"Welcome, Child Jesus!" on the walls  
Our hands had wrought with berries gay,  
In the season of snowfalls,  
For we were nearing Christmas Day.  
And thou wert leaving us, my love!  
Nay, rather, faith beheld thee born!  
Then was the advent of the Dove,  
Our Christmas, and our Easter morn!

When he flew forth, our fluttered bird,  
Carolling toward the sun,  
Within our mournful souls there stirred  
The living Child, the Eternal One!  
Welcome, Child Jesus! Christ is come  
In glory, not in earthly weed!  
Still a child, He makes His home  
Within our soiled and lowly need,  
From His own Life our lives to feed.  
He is called Eric, and He dwells  
In our soul's flower-hallowed dells,  
By Lady Memory's holy wells;  
Ah! not under the heather bells!  
And while he dwelleth in high heaven,  
Under some sweet angel's care,  
He also sootheth our sad even,  
Ever radiantly fair.

Why seek the living among the dead?  
They are not here! alive, arisen,  
Only a ray of them hath fled;  
Angels deliver them from prison!  
Child Eric! when He saw thee bleed,  
Child Jesus came to call thee home;  
But while bereft of thee we roam,  
Thou art more near us, love, indeed,  
More near than in thine earlier state,  
Although we seem so desolate!  
The dead from our wan eyes depart,  
Only to nestle in our heart.  
Mary, weeping, sought the Lord  
In the grave, nor found Him there;  
Mary with her living Lord  
Was communing in her despair,  
Nor knew who communed with her  
there!

We are surely travelling home  
O'er the weary waste of foam,  
Drawn by pure and tranquil eyes  
Of living Orbs within the skies,  
Who rising, we in them arise;  
For all are souls within a Soul,  
And hierarchies of one Spirit whole.  
Our own true selves, alive in God,  
Call our lost selves to His abode,  
Halting along earth's dreary road.  
We are wildered in the gloom,  
Feel blind for one another here,

In a phantom world of doom ;  
 Unfathomable gulfs of fear  
 Sunder our numb human hearts ;  
 Faint feet slide upon the snow,  
 While a drifting vapour parts,  
 Nor others, nor ourselves we know :  
 Thought, dissolved, reels to and fro,  
 Stunned as from a mortal blow.

Ah ! dearest darling, we have loved !  
 None part who once indeed have met ;  
 But thou and I have never proved  
 Love's eternal summer yet !  
 And if the mortal spring be sweet,  
 What will the immortal summer be ?  
 Only a while we may not meet,  
 Maturing for eternity.

The garden is a wilderness ;  
 His little plot of flowers  
 Fallen to weed, and tenantless  
 The silent house ! acacia bowers,  
 With many a gold laburnum tress,  
 Hang white blossom in warm June  
 O'er lowlands, tender as a tune  
 Of turtle-doves, o'er harebell-hued  
 Fair corn, fair meadow-land, and wood.  
 The trees win ampler foliage, height,  
 But all the soul hath taken flight  
 From the scene of our delight.  
 'Tis a warm night now of June ;  
 And in the twilight of the moon  
 That glimmers on the nursery pane,  
 Under the window where we wept,  
 Under the window where he slept,  
 Behold ! a wild wee flower is fain  
 To unclothe soft eyes, though it be night,  
 Revealing a meek visage white,  
 A wild white flower, whose very bane  
 Is garish day, who blossoms only  
 In a twilight cool and lonely ;  
 Here, where with bitter tears I wept,  
 Bitter tears for him who slept,  
 Tears for him who seemed to wane,  
 Lo ! the little flower hath spoken,  
 The frail white blossom hath a token  
 For my faint spirit from her love ;  
 It is an olive leaf the Dove

Brings for my solace from the wild,  
 Telling the deeps have not devoured my child,  
 The child who is my world, my mead, my  
 grove,  
 The fruit, the flower, the fountain of my love !  
 He lives and blooms anew, fresh, pure, and  
 undefiled.  
 Our blossom breathes a holier breath  
 In the calm cool night of Death ;  
 Tho' he so fair in life reposed,  
 The petals of his soul were closed.

A dorhawk whirrs around the plain,  
 Philomel hath ceased to sing,  
 But a cuckoo still is fain  
 To send his voice on languid wing  
 Through the elflight at intervals,  
 As in a drowsy vision calls ;  
 A dream of groves and waterfalls,  
 And pale gold of young corn imbues  
 His languid tone that flows and falls  
 Among star-worlds, and starry dews.  
 O balmy nights within the dells  
 So far behind of vanished years !  
 O nights within the blessed years !  
 How are ye left of all your spells,  
 Returning so ! ye know that one  
 Out of your stilly trance hath gone,  
 Lost ! and do ye calmly breathe ? . . .  
 . . . What is our life, and what is death ?  
 How often have I paced the path  
 Near yon moon-gleaming window-pane,  
 Feeling the little chamber hath  
 More loan of wealth than ere again  
 My love may render unto heaven !  
 (I was unworthy ; so at even  
 He resumed what He had given !)  
 Kingcups and daisies, and white rose,  
 With languid lilies find repose,  
 And his dear eyes in slumber close,  
 Who will leap among them, love them,  
 And will weave a necklace of them,  
 All free from sorrow,  
 If 'tis fair to-morrow !  
 There, in the days that are no more,  
 Thy mother sang thee soft to sleep ;  
 There sang thee into rest more deep,  
 Hushed to sleep for evermore !

Yea, upon our world of woe  
Shut thy pure eyes, dear baby, so!  
Better, better, so!  
Earth's fairest promise founders on the deep;  
Better innocent sleep;  
What heritage I leagued thee, love!  
Sleep, sleep, my dove!  
Fly me! take refuge in the blue above  
From our dim grove  
Of earthly love!

Thou would mimic the cock crowing,  
Cheerily in yonder room;  
How thy voice thrilled through me glowing,  
Gleam waking vaults of age-long gloom!  
Heard from afar by me, as in a tomb  
By bitter memory wrought,  
And solitary thought,  
Passion-fraught!  
There at morn thou and thy brother  
Let your frolic fancies bubble,  
Not for worlds your nurse or mother  
Would have lived without their trouble!  
In yon firwood I roved alone,  
Hearing a dove's tender moan;  
There he ever flew to meet me,  
A very warbling rill he came,  
I knew where he would run to greet me  
Like a gentle gush of flame,  
Where red squirrels leapt and twirled,  
Or song's airy rillet purred  
From birds in sun-illuminated leaves,  
Where young foliage gently heaves,  
As delicate green tresses do  
In clear pulses of sea-blue.

And there he lay upon my breast,  
For he was very tired with play;  
The sun was sinking in the west;  
Cold horror held me as he lay;  
. . . I thought I heard him called away! . . .  
Once, when I brought him forth for air,  
I set him ailing on the stile,  
Till I should fetch from over there  
His pet toy creature; with a smile,  
He prayed that I would go; "for he  
Wants the air like you and me!"

Ah, child! to think that I was here  
Or ever thou, love, did appear  
On our earth-sphere!  
How I wonder from what regions,  
From what shadowy love-legions,  
Thou camest here!  
I thank thee, Heaven, that I quaffed  
Such a deep delicious draught  
From his clear life! None came to waft  
Warnings of woe about the boy;  
How brief the tenure of our joy;  
We never, never dreamed of this,  
Lingering in vistas of immortal bliss!  
Ah! scornful irony of lordly Fate,  
Dallying with mortals in their mean estate!

Nay, surely he hath grown my guide,  
Who lately faltered by my side.  
He is my saint now! his clear eyes  
Have deepened, widened into skies,  
With sweet star influences fraught;  
Ah! let me fare beneath them as I ought!  
Thou art the Lord's own minister!  
Here are frankincense and myrrh;  
Burn them in thy golden censer,  
Till odorous fumes rise ever denser  
From my poor life consumed by fire,  
Diffused, sweet circling, ranging ever higher!  
Baby, in thy wee white cot  
Thou wert embraced! there thou art not!  
Angel now, filling the whole  
Earth and heaven, heart and soul!  
For that thou, my child, endurest,  
In some more royal form maturest,  
Is of all sure things the surest!  
Sights and sounds dissolve, a dream;  
But never what hath made them seem!  
All may perish save the Soul,  
Who breathes and forms the living whole.

But O Thou Spirit at the core  
Of our numb spirits, more and more  
May we hold and feel Thy truth,  
Ever aging into youth!  
Thou who wert awake in God,  
What time Thy feet storm-beaten trod  
Grey waves of our bewilderment,  
Oh, save us from the death where we lie pent!  
To form us in Thee Thy dear Life is lent!

Enthral us with Thine own unfathomable  
 eyes,  
 Till rapt into Thy vision we surprise  
 The grand Foundation-stone that under the  
 World-temple lies!  
 Or with a child's meek wisdom make us wise!  
 Pardon our presumptuous tone,  
 Teach us to feel, Thy Holy will be done!  
 For that is good alone!

### LEAD ME WHERE THE LILY BLOWS

FRIEND, you tell me of a valley  
 Where the pure white lily blows,  
 In a shadowy woodland alley;  
 Lead me to their summer snows!  
 Oh, lead me where the lily blows!  
 I would wear it in my life,  
 Weary of world-soil and strife,  
 Lead me where the lily blows.

Angels planted in my garden,  
 A vain pleasance of ill weeds,  
 One white Lily, and the Warden  
 With sweet air from heaven feeds.  
 Ah! one night my lily died,  
 And I mourned him night and day;  
 "For the bosom of My Bride,"  
 The Lord saith, "he was borne away."  
 Then I wandered through the world  
 To find the flower-de-luce I lost,  
 And my wings will ne'er be furled,  
 Summer-poised, or tempest-tost,  
 Till my lily of the valley  
 Somewhen, somewhere, my spirit find,  
 In a sweet celestial alley,  
 Far from our lost human-kind;  
 Ah, my lily of the valley!  
 Lead me where the lily blows,  
 I would wear it in my life,  
 Weary of world-soil and strife,  
 Oh, lead me where the lily blows!

I wander till I find my flower  
 Breathing a divine perfume;  
 His white petals are a power  
 His lone spirit to illumine:

And I will follow where the Lord  
 Wills my weary feet to go,  
 While ever in my soul I hoard  
 The glimpse allowed to me below  
 Of what belonged to Paradise,  
 Allowed awhile on earth to beam,  
 Until my weary wandering eyes,  
 With patient use, more native seem  
 To shadowy regions of dim death;  
 Till I faint behold my blossom,  
 No more in the outer Court have breath,  
 Earth's outer Court of life and death,  
 As erst, but in my very Bosom!  
 In the Holiest of all,  
 By mine Altar in the gloom,  
 Behold my lily fair and tall,  
 Breathing in immortal bloom!

Every lowly thing that feels,  
 All we misname inanimate,  
 From one Eternal Heart appeals  
 To every heart, as to a mate—  
 "Rejoice, or weep, for our estate!"  
 So, if we love the Father's will,  
 Embrace the world, and help mankind,  
 Our lost lily-bell shall fill  
 With dewy morning soul and mind!  
 For if mine be the true Lily,  
 Whence all lily forms have birth,  
 My holy child will blossom stilly  
 For me in his morning mirth,  
 Fairer than he bloomed on earth!  
 Lead me where the lily blows,  
 I would wear it in my life,  
 Weary of world-soil and strife,  
 Oh, lead me where the lily blows!

### "THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE"

WHENE'ER there comes a little child,  
 My darling comes with him;  
 Whene'er I hear a birdie wild  
 Who sings his merry whim,  
 Mine sings with him:  
 If a low strain of music sails  
 Among melodious hills and dales,

When a white lamb or kitten leaps,  
 Or star, or vernal flower peeps,  
 When rainbow dews are pulsing joy,  
 Or sunny waves, or leaflets toy,  
 Then he who sleeps  
 Softly wakes within my heart ;  
 With a kiss from him I start ;  
 He lays his head upon my breast,  
 Tho' I may not see my guest,  
 Dear bosom-guest !  
 In all that's pure and fair and good,  
 I feel the spring-time of thy blood,  
 Hear thy whispered accents flow  
 To lighten woe,  
 Feel them blend,  
 Although I fail to comprehend.  
 And if one woundeth with harsh word,  
 Or deed, a child, or beast, or bird,  
 It seems to strike weak Innocence  
 Through him, who hath for his defence  
 Thunder of the All-loving Sire,  
 And mine, to whom He gave the fire.

### CHRISTMAS EVE

SHIMMER of laughter,  
 Glimmer of play,  
 Flown in a wafture,  
 Blown in a spray,  
 From blithe floor and rafter  
 Over the way !

I know it is feast-day, a  
 Mirth-day for all ;  
 Oh, to the least may a  
 Birthday befall ;  
 And the high priest play  
 There in the hall !  
 Play with his treasures ;  
 He is a child,  
 Swaying their pleasures,  
 Being so mild ;  
 The Holy One measures  
 Mirth for a child.

Weep we less wildly !  
 Sleeping is well ;  
 The Lord hath laid on him  
 A wonderful spell.  
 Flower-band childly,  
 Call away fear !  
 Our hand mildly  
 Tender you cheer !

How I muse of him  
 Gambolling so,  
 With all these who love him  
 A brief while ago,  
 Heaven's joy above him,  
 Our joy below !

Ah ! may you be merry  
 While one is lost,  
 In his dear bosom the  
 Terrible frost ?  
 Smile we who bury  
 All we love most ?

Or is he hiding  
 Here in the hall,  
 And will he come gliding  
 Swift when we call ?  
 Yea ! I have found him,  
 Nor ever we part,  
 Love hath unbound him  
 Deep down in my heart !

### “THE PEACE OF GOD, WHICH PASSETH ALL UNDER- STANDING”

I WONDER why God hurts little ones in  
 hospital yonder,  
 Lying so pale and quiet, each in his narrow  
 bed,  
 Who should be filling the radiant air with  
 ringing laughter !  
 Here fiendish fingers torture every restless  
 head.  
 The merry hearts are delivered over to cruel  
 Anguish !

Why doth God not scare the loathsome Pest  
away,  
The harpy at her feast on His own little ones  
who play?  
Ah! was it well to blast their one poor hour  
for pleasure,  
Who will weep in dull November, nor ever  
have known a May?  
Nay! the little ones are Thy children, Thou  
hast given them gladness!  
May I not trust Thee with them, who art the  
pity in me?  
For how my heart leaps up when I see their  
dear eyes dawning,  
Beholding a toy lamb I bring them tenderly!  
Shall my poor rill of love be more than the  
infinite fountain?  
Then the womb of all were chaos, one wild  
disharmony!  
Nay, the river of reason sweeps imperially  
rolling  
To a goal of reconciliation afar from mortal  
eye!  
Refuse foul is food for a fair supernal flower;  
Blaspheme not the rank soil where a pure  
blossom springs;  
For blossom soars away in a singing-bird's  
blithe pinion,  
And bird yields a meek life for a spiritual  
king's.  
Discord feeds, and fades in a universal  
chorus,  
And the world-psalm were silent, wanting  
moods of bale—  
So only Love may work her full miracle of  
blessing;  
Annihilate the base metal, all her art would  
fail.  
Cease, baffled heart! thy longing to unravel  
the confusion:  
Nay! for I hear a Voice beyond the æonian  
wail!  
The immeasurable ideal holds us, laps the  
world in splendour;  
Every dark point dissolves, and radiates  
glory infinite,  
Heaves in waves of mystic music among the  
heavenlies out of sight.

The Ideal involved within impels to re-  
concile,  
Blessing vile, and mean, and woeworn with  
a faint, far smile.

### "THE CLOUD MAY SAIL THERE"

THE cloud may sail there,  
Day flow and fail there,  
And the eagle fly,  
Haze overshadow  
A smooth snow meadow,  
And gleams of silver  
Fleeting fly  
From yon cloud-delver  
Of gleaming eye!  
The moon may tarry with  
Her pale bow,  
And moonrise marry with  
Virgin snow,  
Blue heavens abide,  
Or solemn-eyed  
Stars by night, who gaze and go:  
Ah! ne'er pollute  
With a mortal foot  
Yon realms of spirits aerial;  
All but the lute  
Of air be mute  
From rosy morn to evening fall,  
While flowerets blue,  
Fair with dew,  
Laugh to the azure over all;  
Let a music mazy,  
Born of the hazy  
Play of a tender light and shade,  
On hallowed ground  
Dance with the sound  
Fairy horns have faintly made;  
A cloud of snow  
Softly blow  
On the blue verge of the form so white,  
Delicate curl  
In a windy whirl;  
But man, be far from the holy height,  
Soil no fair fields of frosty light!

## DE PROFUNDIS

I.—NAY

How may we trust Thee, Majesty Supreme!  
We whose dim life fleets by, an idle dream,  
Amid the ruining welter, and the wash  
Of shattered Faiths, and holiest Hopes that  
flash

To annihilation in a moment, or slow wane,  
Till what lay desert desert lies again,  
Fooled for an hour with visions of ripe grain,  
Withered ere harvest! Oh, the weary round  
Of life and death halting within a bound  
Of adamant, and fluctuating, ever  
Goaded to dissonant, impotent endeavour!  
Warring, we swarm to scale a phantom height,  
We whose feet fail in some drear infinite!  
Piteous human bones upon the waste  
Jeer, as we wander, our infatuate haste.  
Where now the goal and beacon of strong  
youth?

Where those far havens of Eternal Truth?  
Fabled Atlantis, islands of the blest,  
In shadowy sunset kingdoms of the West,  
If we may reach you, we may find you naught,  
Mere human visions, hollow and glamour-  
fraught!

Where now the morning-land of Love we saw?  
Vanished, a pure white snow-wreath in a  
thaw!

Where youth's high hope to order the wild  
world?

A once-bright banner, mouldering and furled!  
The stern resolve to mould a world within?  
Dead in deep jungles of inveterate sin!

Or may the race prove conqueror, tho' we  
fall?

Through long-vexed infancy the tribes grow  
tall,

Then slow declining, falter to the grave;  
Nor wiser, happier, they who bloom and wane  
In their rank ruin: whatsoe'er the gain,  
Some earlier glory of the flower will wane!

No sweet sound food, the fruit of wrong and  
pain.

Ah! dear young children, cankered in the bud,  
Surely the harvest battenning on your blood  
Must be transcendent, ere we may embrace  
Meekly the holocaust of all your grace!

Nay! for no triumph splendid as the sun

Were an atonement for the loss of one.

Poor hearts expiring rend with wail sublime  
God's vast world-palace, founded upon crime,  
Whose ponderous, hell-poised blocks for  
their cement

Have meek red blood of all the innocent!

Nay, some faint protest of a humblest heart

Should shame and shatter such infernal art!

If He be lord who builds it, we will not

Worship, in how fierce fires soe'er our lot

He appoint for our rebellion! but I deem

'Tis only fever that so makes it seem!

Interminable armies ever wend

O'er maimed and martyred comrades to  
their end

Of blind, unused extinction, tho' the hope

Of infinite Love and Justice while they grope

Be kindled in their bosoms for a lure,

Fooling their hearts the torture to endure

Of false life longer, ere immersed in night

They feed some monstrous Blossom on the  
height

Of this infernal column of a world:

For it their souls one refuse-heap were hurled,

Bleeding and writhing, to annihilation,

For some sleek mortal god to inhale oblation

Of waste breaths, wrung from sentient agony,

A vampire draining life of these who die!

So that fierce carnage, cast in foemen's  
bronze,

Mounts serpentine to swell Napoleon's

Inhuman triumph, whose proud solitude

Stands pillared, purpled with the people's  
blood!<sup>28</sup>

The hecatomb of myriadfold dumb lives

Invokes a clinging curse on Him who thrives

From their long torture; inarticulate calls

Man's beast progenitor! lo! from hopeless  
falls

Under the precipice of grand endeavour,

Beautiful youths and maidens, mute for ever,

Piteously silent, utter loud reproof  
 On Him who holds Himself unseen, aloof,  
 And makes Him sport, engendering their vain  
 Faith, effort, prayer, the longer to sustain  
 This miserable mockery of life  
 Wherewith He endows them, grim and cold,  
 and rife  
 With cruel humour, with insane, fierce relish  
 For wine of anguish wrung from tortures  
 hellish  
 Of souls and bodies! lo! we all pass by,  
 Saluting Cæsar, men who are to die!

Or is it but inevitable, blind,  
 Dull monster Force, that doth terrific grind  
 Forth idle aspiration, and fond fears,  
 Illusive bliss, and terror, and wild tears  
 From one dim, boundless chaos of a womb,  
 Till, white with horror of the waking doom,  
 All cower for refuge in their natal tomb?

Hath God, like mortals, a divided will,  
 Drunkenly reeling from weak good to ill?  
 Yea, there be throned gods, fallen dignities!  
 But high beyond we lift our longing eyes!  
 Ye may not fold your thoughts at such a  
 goal,  
 Impelled to seek the spiritual Pole,  
 Ideal lodestar of the pilgrim soul!

What meaneth, then, this horrible array?  
 Abortions seizing hard breath for a day  
 When they have mangled, mad with famine-  
 rages,  
 Foul mates through dark interminable ages,  
 Loathsome with low lust, anguish, desolation!  
 Until awakes Man's mournful generation  
 From the colossal ruin of lost life;  
 And lo! his infinite, opening eyes are rife  
 With hunger for eternal days, and good,  
 Piteously craved as necessary food!  
 Reveal from whence the holy hunger comes!  
 For all the mute onlookers turn their thumbs  
 Doomward around the immense arena spaces,  
 As Man, the victim, peers in their dread  
 faces,  
 Implacable, though all the beauty-flower  
 Of the young gladiator plead with power!

Say, whence this thirst for truth and righteous-  
 ness,  
 If there be no eternal Spring to bless,  
 No Arm to quell the tyrant, or redress  
 Mad earth's injustice? Myriadfold we grovel,  
 A human swine on palace floor, and hovel,  
 Bound by a Circe, albeit half aware  
 We are fallen gods in some sublime despair!

O monstrous Nature! human-headed Beast,  
 Thou cannibal at some unnatural feast  
 On thine own offspring! who hast whelped  
 the fiend,  
 And man, whose offal-feeding frenzy gleaned  
 The hell-field of foul horrors, left unreaped  
 By devils; his black coward heart full-steeped  
 In outrage, lies, and murderous lust for pain,  
 Whom all the unbounded tortures bigots feign  
 May purge not from the abominable stain!

O monstrous world, where innocent chil-  
 dren jostle  
 Fiends from the pit! where snakes constrict  
 the throistle,  
 Singing of Paradise! infuse the fire,  
 And gloat upon her pangs till she expire,  
 Her music foundering in confusion dire!

Surely there be twin fountains of the world,  
 And Love brought forth what Hate to ruin  
 hurled!  
 Love looses lucid waters, and they sing;  
 But ever one squats to pollute the spring!  
 Ah, Lord! who wilt well! Thy lame hands  
 falter,  
 While Death and Sin defile Thy Bride before  
 the altar!  
 Poor Love! and couldst not Thou preserve  
 Thy daughter  
 From infamy and ravishment and slaughter?  
 I know not! only know that we are blind. . . .  
 Thou wilt divide this kingdom of the mind,  
 Thou threatenest if I dare behold Thy face,  
 Nor cower obsequious in my native place?  
 I see Thy doom-engraving fiery finger!  
 I hear Thy loud anathema—and linger!  
 Tho' jealous, Thou arraignest for high treason  
 Our Babylonian banquets of the reason.

We, scowling outcasts, branded sons of  
 Cain,  
 Hear with a vast, ineffable disdain  
 Sleek minions of prosperity prate peace!  
 While wrung upon the rack we claim release,  
 Or with gnawn entrails clench firm teeth,  
     nor cry;  
 Let one call to us from the abyss of agony!  
 Speak, Jesus!—lo! we listen ere we die.

## II.—YEA

And what if all the death, and all the dolor  
 Do but imbue with life of lustrous colour  
 Alien natures? if the blood we bled  
 Grow substance of another heart full-fed?  
 Thrice aureoled the sacrificial Lamb,  
 Rolled in a fair victorious oriflamme  
 Of His own slaughter! fiery pangs of glory,  
 Wherein a life dissolves to blend one story  
 With God's world-triumph, so alone fulfilling  
 True personal being, through the ordeal killing  
 Mere individual semblance of an hour;  
 While in the end all martyrs find a power  
 To joy in each redeeming martyrdom,  
 When Love's own royal reign hath wholly  
     come.

Thrice happy he who keeps the mournful  
 tryst  
 By some wan wave of weeping with the  
 Christ,  
 Wearing all sombre emblems of the Passion,  
 In deep dim valleys of humiliation,  
 Whose weeds glow with Divine Humanity,  
 Discovering what we are, were, and shall be!  
 For he is driven from all earthly shows  
 To find the Spirit's own divine repose;  
 The Spirit, whom no reons brought to birth,  
 Nor ever-rolling ages doom to dearth!  
 He lightly fondles every lovely thing,  
 As well aware he may not closely cling,  
 For joy alit here hath a wandering wing,  
 Fair evanescent gleaming of the true,  
 Abiding ever tranquil out of view.  
 Yea, these shall feel Love's own rare vintage  
     prest  
 From sin, and sorrow, and the world's unrest;

Calvary's midnight, with the cross of shame,  
 The very heart of Love's immortal flame!  
 While agony weighs common mortals down,  
 Our heroes lift, and wear it for a crown:  
 A bow that none save hallowed hearts may  
     bend,  
 A sword that will the weakling wielder rend,  
 Spell for a mighty Mage to conjure with,  
 Confounding fools who are not of their kith!  
 But woe for him who is contented here!  
 Tho' lordly gold adorn his lonely bier,  
 Dead, self-involved, and stark, a thing of  
     fear!

One justifies the sweet nest-building birds,  
 And blind prevision of the honied herds:  
 Shall Nature only disappoint, and flout  
 Her fairest Son, who floundering in doubt,  
 Yet lifts child-eyes in dim pathetic trust,  
 With, "Mother, wilt thou leave me in the  
     dust?"  
 Ye, scarred with moral ulcers from the womb,  
 Who can but fester for a moral tomb,  
 Whom penal strokes, and groping cures  
     immerse  
 More deeply in the virus of your curse!  
 Mine own dear children, of hope unfulfilled!  
 Ye myriad maimed souls, who seem but  
     spilled  
 Vainly in void abysses! you, ye germs,  
 Who perish in dark cherishing earth! poor  
     worms  
 A careless delver wounds; all lowly creatures  
 Or man or nature rends! your very features  
 We may discern not: only through a veil  
 We feel some form: and our wan cheeks are  
     pale,  
 Deeming the selves inviolable may fail,  
 With their own shows of being! On a  
     moment  
 Of your eternal lives we pass vain comment,  
 Judging by sense, in place of Love's deep  
     reason,  
 Whence our wild insult and reproach; high  
     treason  
 Against that Mother-heart of all the world,  
 Who hath all souls beneath her warm wings  
     curled

Invulnerable! however they may tremble,  
And though her love one bitter hour dis-  
semble

For their maturing; with a pitying smile  
She views our wilful wandering awhile.

All are in all they were, and yet shall be,  
Dawning to conscious self-identity.

For all is spirit, and the world is wrought  
In one live loom of myriad-minded thought.

But what if all sink in the abyss of wrong,  
And so by dark experience grow strong?

Embryo souls, who tortuously mount,  
Like fallen water, to their natal fount!

Fair glories of a future flower feed  
On degradation of her buried seed.

Tho' spherical music in dull hearts may sleep,  
Sound but their own note, they will laugh  
and leap,

Even as dumb chords, or flames quiver and  
sing,

If their peculiar tone be vibrating.

The sun-god lies not dead within the shroud,  
Tho' shorn of beams he dwindle in a cloud.

Yea, all the vaster souls in whom we fell  
By right divine will rouse them from their  
hell,

To claim the royal heritage of sons.

And whatsoever beast, or elfin runs

Through alien regions of the realms of being,  
Where every pilgrim haply halts in fleeing  
From God to God, accomplishing the round  
Allotted, when he hath won the vantage-  
ground

And heights of destiny, unrolled sublime  
Beneath he will behold the vales of time,  
And every station where he made sad pause,  
'Mid ranks unseen, breathing unheard ap-  
pause,

Who helped, with touch impalpable of soul  
On soul, the spirit journeying to her goal:  
Nor in sad sooth unhindered by the host  
Of royal rebels, whom we count for lost,  
Yet who, like men, are only gold and clay;  
Nor by some loathly haunters of the grey  
Breath from low-lying pestilential mud,  
Earth's hideous lusts leave in their filthy  
flood.

But some are so enamoured of dark Death,  
They only long to be relieved of breath.

Yet, saving folk whom the fell Fury's goad,  
Or stern Despair drives from our hard abode,

Who but a coward self-involved may crave  
Unending sluggard sleep in the dull grave?

His own poor comfort so repleteth him,  
One drop of earth's pale vintage can so brim

A human want we counted infinite,

Or one defeat so daunt the whim to fight,

That how God's armies fare concerns him not,  
If he may lie at ease, and idly rot!

Shall one, whose mind co-operates to found  
The vision of a world with ne'er a bound,

Merge into some mere image, or a feeling  
From forth an alien spirit swiftly stealing?

Material appearance can be naught,

Save in a human, or a foreign thought.

All this imperial fabric of the sense

Is but our own dull rendering of intense

Supernal realms of righteousness and love,

Fair shadow of a fairer realm above.

The spirit grows the form for self-expres-  
sion,

And for a hall where she may hold high  
session

With sister souls, who, allied with her,  
create

Her fair companion, her espoused mate.

Ever the hidden Person will remould

For all our lives fresh organs manifold,

Gross for the earthly, for the heavenly  
fine,

Ethereal woof, wherein their graces shine.

And there be secret avenues, with doors

Yielding access to inmost chamber floors

Of the soul's privacy; all varying frames,

Responsive to the several spirit-flames.

The vital form our lost now animate

Is one with what in their low mortal state

They made their own; the corse mere ashes,  
waste,

For all grand uses of the world replaced.

A larva needs no more the unliving husk,

When soaring winged he rends the dwelling  
dusk.

A rabble rout of Sense light-headed pours  
 Into the holy Spirit-temple doors,  
 Where many a grave and stately minister  
 His place and function doth on each confer.  
 These Forms inhabiting the sacred gloom,  
 Whose name is legion, Present, Past, To  
 Come,  
 One, Many, Same, or Different, evolve  
 Sweet concord from confusion; they resolve  
 The Babel dissonance to a choral song,  
 Till in divine societies a throng  
 Sets with one will toward the inmost shrine,  
 To feed there upon mystic Bread and Wine.  
 The Bacchanals are sobered, and grow grave,  
 In solemn silence treading the dim nave:  
 On their light hearts bloom-pinioned angels  
 lay  
 Calm, hushful hands of married night and day.

It is a changing scene within the pile:  
 New shows arrive, and tarry for a while:  
 But if one living Spirit-fane could fall,  
 His ruin were the knell of doom for all.  
 Their being blended each with every one,  
 If any failed, the universe were gone.  
 These conscious forms inhabit every mind;  
 All selves in one organic self they bind;  
 The bloomy beams, and all the shadowy  
 blooms

Are pure white Light eternal that illumines  
 A universal conscious Spirit-whole,  
 Fair modulated in each several soul  
 To many-functioned organs of one Will,  
 Whose sovran Being who prevails to kill?  
 We may expand our being to embrace,  
 And mirror all therein of every race;  
 Each is himself by universal grace.  
 Dying is self-fulfilment; and we cherish  
 His life, who, wanting ours, would wholly  
 perish.

The Father may not be without the Son;  
 No love, will, knowledge, were for Him alone.  
 And change is naught  
 Save at the bar of a sole personal thought,  
 Enthroned for judgment, summoning past time  
 With present, hearing now concordant rhyme,  
 Now variance among voices vanishing,  
 That so win semblance of substantial thing.

But how conceive that there may ever be  
 Change in the nerve of change, our known  
 identity?

If we, poor worms, involved in our own  
 cloud,

Deem the wide world lies darkling in a shroud,  
 Raving the earth holds no felicity,  
 One child's clear laughter may rebuke the lie,  
 A lark's light rapture soaring in the blue,  
 Or rainbow radiant from a drop of dew!

Nor let a low-born Sense usurp the rule,  
 Who is but handmaid in a loftier school,  
 Where Love and Conscience a lore not of  
 earth

Impart to Wisdom, child of heavenly birth.  
 O Thou unknown, inscrutable Divine!  
 I deem that I am Thine, and Thou art mine!  
 And though I may not gaze into Thy face,  
 I feel that all are clasped in Thine embrace.  
 The Christ is with us, and He points to Thee:  
 When we have grown into Him we shall see;  
 Behold the Father in the perfect Son,  
 And feel, with Him, Thy holy will be done!

Love may not compass her full harmony,  
 Wanting the deep dread note of those who die.  
 And as with master-hand He sweeps the  
 grand awakening chords,  
 Our wailing sighs leap winged, live talismanic  
 words,  
 Dull woes and errors tempered to seraphic  
 swords,  
 Love's colour-chorus flames with glorious  
 morning-red,  
 His alchemy transmuting the poured heart's  
 blood of our dead,  
 And lurid bale from murderous eyes of souls  
 who inly bled!

Whose mortal mind may sail around the  
 ocean of Thy might,  
 Billowing away in awful gloom to issues  
 infinite?  
 Bind Thee with his poor girdle? Surveying  
 all Thy shore!

His daring sinks confounded, foundering ever-  
more,  
In his dazed ear reverberating a tempestuous  
roar!  
. . . Who sounds the abyss of Thine immense  
design? We rest,  
Aware that Thou art better than our best.

### "THE DESERT SHALL BLOSSOM AS THE ROSE"

THE desert way is dreary,  
All empty is the wild,  
My feet are very weary,  
I cannot find my child.  
The infinite blank spaces  
Are weighing on my soul,  
Gloom reigns in their dumb faces,  
And there is no goal!  
My hand is on the hollow,  
Where I dreamed a heart;  
The world is dead; I follow,  
Darling, where thou art!  
But while my Hope was swooning,  
And Earth and Heaven reeled,  
I heard an infant moaning,  
Who to my love appealed:  
So then I prayed for power,  
And laid him on my breast;  
The little human flower  
Sank trustfully to rest—  
But in the self-same hour  
My form the cold earth pressed. . . .

. . . An orbèd luminous haze-lily,  
For pistil the Moon-pearl!  
Ringèd round with daffadownilly,  
A halo of blown curl,  
As of young angels kneeling,  
A reverent band aloof!  
Earth smiles in the revealing  
Of Heaven's aery woof.  
The stranger child I lifted  
Wan lieth where he fell;  
His scanty raiment rifted,  
And woeworn features tell

Of a lifelong famine,  
Of cruelty and pain:  
And now, while I examine  
The piteous face again,  
Meseems there dawns a kindred  
To a long-lost face;  
While wakening unhindered  
Wings of filmy grace  
From the poor frayed swathings  
Of his soiled garments break,  
And delicate soft bathings  
In the moon-sphere make.  
Behold! they turn to flowers,  
And settle in his hair,  
All over him in showers;  
He hath grown so fair!  
Christ in him overpowers  
Dull strength of my despair:  
While some sweet kindred gathers  
To one fair face I love:  
Ye divine it, fathers,  
Who have a child above!  
. . . Lo! an eyelid fluttered;  
I know the bosom heaved!  
. . . Now his own arms have uttered  
All I disbelieved!  
Dear eyes, long held in durance,  
For ever open wide,  
To yield my soul assurance  
Of all she hath denied!

### FLOWER TO FLOWER

EUCCHARIS lilies,  
Roses red,  
Lie on the form of the  
Early dead;  
Eucharis lilies,  
Roses white,  
Lie on the shrine of a  
Jewel of Light!  
Tho' the jewel be flown, O, the  
Shrine is fair;  
Flowers are breathing  
Everywhere,  
Within his bosom and  
Wavy hair;

Flowers for emblem,  
 Flowers for faith,  
 Sweet mortal words  
 The Immortal saith!  
 Beautiful souls  
 Akin to his,  
 Who seem to be born  
 Out of all he is,  
 Who love to be born,  
 And to die for this.  
 Flowers for remembrance,  
 Flowers for truth;  
 Thoughts of the angel of  
 Innocent youth;  
 Dews of the morning  
 Over their mirth,  
 Softly awaking  
 From sleep in earth;  
 Sweet resurrection,  
 A holy birth!  
 Red for renouncement,  
 Green is for hope,  
 White for humility,  
 Flowers who droop;  
 Pale for his purity;  
 Fair they link,  
 Leaning a hand to us,  
 Ere we sink.  
 Azure for infinite  
 Heaven's embrace,  
 Tender and true  
 Celestial grace;  
 Red for the heart's blood  
 Of Christ our Lord;  
 Blue for His Love, who will  
 Keep His Word,  
 Pansy and violet,  
 Primrose pale,  
 Lily of the valley,  
 Folded frail.  
 And water-lily  
 Fulfil the tale.  
 Pansy and violet,  
 Lilies white,  
 All for the form of a  
 Lily of Light!

## VALE!

O TENDER dove, sweet circling in the  
 blue,  
 Whom now a delicate cloud receives from  
 view,  
 A cool, soft, delicate cloud, we name dim  
 Death!  
 O pure white lamb-lily, inhaling breath  
 From spiritual ether among bowers  
 Of evergreen in the ever-living flowers  
 Yonder aloft upon the airy height,  
 Mine eyes may scarce arrive at thy still  
 light!  
 Wandering ever higher, oh, farewell!  
 Wilt thou the dear God tell  
 We loved thee well,  
 While He would lend thee? Why may we  
 not follow?  
 Do thou remember us in our dim hollow!  
 Farewell, love! oh, farewell, farewell, fare-  
 well!  
 We wave to thee, as when of old  
 Thou waved, and we waved, heart of gold!  
 Parting for a little while?  
 And is all parting only for a while?  
 O faint perfume from realms beyond the  
 sky!  
 Waft of a low celestial melody!  
 O pure live water from our earthly well,  
 Whom Love changed to a heavenly ænomel,  
 The while he kissed the bowl with longing  
 lip,  
 And drew the soul therein to fellowship!  
 Shimmer of white wings, ere ye vanish!  
 Glimmer of white robes, ere ye banish,  
 With your full glory, mortal eyes  
 From paradise!  
 So far, so far,  
 Little star!  
 Unless thine own dear happiness it mar,  
 Remember us in our low dell,  
 Who love thee well!  
 Farewell!



SONGS OF THE HEIGHTS  
AND DEEPS<sup>2</sup>

1885



DEDICATED  
TO  
MY SISTER



# SONGS OF THE HEIGHTS AND DEEPS

## A LAY OF CIVILISATION : OR, LONDON

### PROLOGUE

CITY of light and shadow, height and deep,  
Yawning abysm sundering rich and poor !  
One upon velvet pile or marble floor  
Feasts, while another starves, whom even sleep  
Flieth as God-abandoned ; children weep  
Around their mother ; at the rich man's door  
She cursing God and man dies : ye who keep  
High festival with morning, temple, tower,  
Broad palace, rather in congenial night  
Avoid ashamed the level eyes of light !  
Cower hidden ! royal river in your pride,  
With world-wealth mantling on your stately  
tide,  
Steal muffled in deep gloom ! slow bells be  
toll'd !  
Thou on the proud dome, glistening cross of  
gold,  
Thy life is changed to hard death bought and  
sold.  
Art thou the hilt of a death-drinking sword  
Plunged in Earth's heart by some infernal  
Lord ?  
Brethren of Him who fainted on the wood,  
What help is found in yon devouring rood ?  
What help ? what hope ? a sceptred Woman  
bows  
Under a lowly lintel, and none knows ;  
Humbly she helpeth bitter loathly need,  
Beareth the burden, dons the lowly weed.  
Babes the high honour of their trust confer  
Upon this royal lady, and by her  
Perchance the city may be saved from fire,  
That lurid lurks, and threats to make it one  
red funeral pyre !

UNDER awakening woods I heard the birds  
With no reserve unbosom all their joy :  
Even as a beam reveals the limpid deep  
Of a pure pool, sweet song revealed their heart,  
A shadowless illimitable bliss  
Of innocent love ; the joy of wakening woods  
Welled over in soft frills of fairy leaves,  
Glossy and tender flakelets of green light,  
Infolded mutually ; fair forest aisles  
Dawn to leaf-laughter silent and serene :  
One would surmise the new-born delicate  
leaves  
Thronged to the ends of all the twigs to hear  
Innumerable bird-song, called from sleep  
By many a plumed Orpheus : their blithe notes  
Weave webs of music multitudinous,  
Even as a leafing tracery of stems  
With wayward bronze embroiders the blue air.  
It seems afar one smoke above the silver  
Of birchen boles ; beneath, the English flower,  
The flower so dear to English hearts, nor least  
When we abide among the sunnier blooms  
Of alien lands, the pure and pale primrose,  
Gathers in sisterhoods upon the breast  
Of greening earth, her still abiding smiles  
Fair with assurance of humility.  
And when their pale cool flame is far effused,  
Earth in her lowlihood may vie with Heaven,  
With Heaven, what time the dawning East  
conceives  
A half-awakened light hued like the flower.

Down a green dale I heard some children  
room,  
Merrily laughing by a rivulet ;  
Then a hawk hovered, and sweet songs were  
hushed  
In the grove under.

All the scene grew dim,  
Appeared to melt before mine eyes, and change.

I heard, and heard not, for the land dissolved,  
 And clouding slowly, lo ! another sound,  
 Akin to the sea-sound, was in mine ears,  
 Resembling some huge roar of a far furnace,  
 Whose sullen flare through wallowing mists  
 impure  
 Burned like the fire-flush from those realms  
 of Dis  
 In that deep-mouthed verse of the Mantuan.  
 Huge murmur from the throat of Babylon !  
 Illimitable leagues of piles confused,  
 Dome, tower, and steeple, stately palaces,  
 Islanded in a welter of dim street ;  
 Mean habitations, warrens of dun life,  
 Tortuous, swarming ; sullied, pale, cramped  
 life,  
 With, in the midst, a large imperial River,  
 Turbid and troubled, the town's artery,  
 Spanned by tumultuous bridges ; o'er them  
 clang  
 Steam-dragon, chariot, horse, and laden wain,  
 With hurrying people of the human hive ;  
 Whose shores are thronged with warehouse,  
 opulent wharf,  
 Whose turbulent tide upbuoyeth bark and  
 barge,  
 Throbbing, foam-trailing steamer, russet sail,  
 And stately ships from far sea-sundered lands.  
 But over all a brown Plutonian gloom  
 Of murk air dismal and defiled, the breath  
 Of our so monstrous town—her visible sin,  
 And weight of wan woe, blotting out sweet  
 heaven !  
 Behold the River ! a guilt-laden ghost,  
 How he hurries all unlingering below,  
 Away, away, through horror of deep night,  
 Pale with the guilty secret of the city !  
 Like that sin-burdened victim, driven forth  
 In Israel to the wilds, ashamed Thames  
 Rolls headlong, tarries nor to look, nor listen,  
 Hastens to hide himself in the great Deep,  
 There to confide, unbosom, bury there,  
 The tomb, the womb, the unfathomed other-  
 world,  
 Absolving and absorbing Mother Ocean,  
 The ineffable oppression at his heart,  
 The horror of unutterable wrong !

How changed, O Thames ! from in thine  
 earlier hour  
 Of child-like dallying among reeds and lilies,  
 White swans, and flowers, and boats of  
 lingering lovers,  
 By Marlow, Maidenhead, or Cliveden Grove !

But darkness deepens : by the parapet  
 Of that great platform which embanks the  
 tide,  
 While sudden lights leap to assuage the gloom,  
 Wavering on the water, and loud trains  
 Turn cloudy fiery serpents on the bridge,  
 I note the faded features of a girl,  
 Who clasps a pining infant to her breast,  
 And my heart, gazing into that wan face,  
 Named her Despair ; no other name she bore  
 Surely among the angels, or the fiends,  
 Whose hate environs earth : she mounts the  
 wall ;  
 Springs, and two lives have vanished in the  
 void !

Happy birds fluting in the leafy woods,  
 And children playing by the rivulet !

Hard by, the glare and Babel-roar, where  
 men  
 With women drink fire of forgetfulness,  
 Flying from ash-pale spectres of dim life  
 Into the burning bosom of mad fiends—  
 Hard by, within the gloom of the low lane,  
 Else empty, slouches a dun-vestured form  
 Of one who peers, like some gaunt beast of  
 prey,  
 Yonder upon the pavement ; for he deems  
 He sees within the tract of lamplit stone  
 A morsel of soiled food, fallen casually  
 From Plenty satiated ; pouncing on it,  
 He ravenously feeds ; but one who passed  
 Bestows a coin within the skeleton claw  
 Of him, who murmurs some faint sound of  
 joy ;  
 And then, himself unseen, the benefactor  
 Saw the man kneel bare-headed on the flags,  
 And lift clasped hands of gratitude to God.  
 It is not far to where the lordly street  
 Hath wares luxuriant myriad-fold displayed

Behind illumined panes; the hurrying throngs  
 Tramp with their broken talk; they whirl  
     on wheels,  
 Soft-raimented, gems flashing from white  
     shoulders,  
 Or swarm from forth the stately spectacle,  
 Embathed in yellow lustre of the lamps.

It is a gala-night; they laugh, they dance,  
 In perfumed chamber youth low whispers  
     love;

At high doors lounge the sumptuous serving-  
     men;

While glowing globes of emerald or ruby  
 Adorn, disposed with manifold design,  
 Each ample thoroughfare; the crimson hangs  
 From all high windows; launched from every  
     steeple

Roll blazoned banners; floods of light beneath  
 Hail floods of sound aloft delirious,  
 Pealed from wild reeling bells in dome and  
     tower;

For some imperial pageantry hath passed,  
 With blare of scarlet, festival and pomp  
 Of martial music, horse-tramp, and clanked  
     sabre:

Our arms perchance have triumphed on far  
     fields;

Or it may be the birthday of a king.  
 And yet my sombre heart reverts to him  
 Who snatched that offal from the pavement,  
     sees

White retrograded faces of the crowd,  
 The outraged, foundered womanhood of  
     towns:

Cold women huddling on the stately stairs,  
 Who cower in shadow with their babes, till one  
 Bids them begone; there is no room for them.

And who is here? a hunger-withered girl,  
 In grip of some black myrmidon of law.  
 Her crime, I pray you? She hath stolen a  
     flower

From a rich lord's immeasurable land.  
 Her mother, poor and bedridden, so longed  
 To see and smell a flower: "I took it for her;  
 She has no friend, sir, very little food."  
 The girl low weeps; the mother waits her child.

Then was I taken through some noisome  
     lanes,

Among ill faces bleared, unhumanised,  
 Like hideous apparitions from the tomb,  
 That hoarsely chaffered by lit market-stalls,  
 Into a dwelling, meanest of the mean,  
 Where a young child lay weeping; crippled  
     frame,

And hopeless face told plainly of one refused  
 Bodily sustenance, untended, maimed,  
 Scarred with habitual blows; while cruel cold  
 Looks, and harsh words have laid waste her  
     young life.

A man weak-visaged cowered before a woman  
 Inflamed with drink, and choler—father,  
     mother,

Men named the pair—and save for reeking  
     rags

Upon the floor, a broken chair, some shards  
 Of littered food, the filthy room was bare!  
 But pale Death looked with pity on the  
     child. . . .

. . . In a vault hard by of some deserted  
     house

There lies the body of a murdered girl,  
 None knowing, save night-hearted murderers;  
 Unowned, unwept by any man, or woman  
 In this confused, loud-battling multitude.

Is there indeed no more than doth appear?  
 An outraged and extinguished human soul,  
 Four blank dead walls, a silent senseless  
     night—

Senseless and silent, save for our loud ears—  
 Around the ruin of what seemed a child?  
 Foul insult hath been proffered here to Man!  
 In all yon vain expanse of impotent worlds,  
 May none be found to avenge, or make  
     amends?

Nay! if there are no Presences unseen  
 By mortals, unbelievable by sense,  
 Who have the child in charge, who bore her  
     home,

Then from this dead-alive mad charnel-dance  
 Of earth let us depart, where all most wise,  
 Kind and heroic souls may not avail  
 To make our life endurable, though they,  
 With their poor lowly cups of cool clear water,

In this despair, and dearth, and dissonance,  
 Rendering fair Love palpable by loving,  
 Be the sole salt of our dark world's corruption.

Happy birds fluting in the leafy woods,  
 And children playing by the rivulet!

Next into neighbouring tenements I came,  
 Where hideous Lust with venal Force conspired

To outrage fair and feeble innocence,  
 By parents sold to ruin for base coin, . . .  
 . . . Then a voice spake: "Consider where  
 you are!"

And sore amazed, I found me in a church;  
 But the voice said: "Lo! here they do as  
 there!"

Here well-attired smooth dames and cavaliers  
 Assisted, while bland mother and smug sire  
 Delivered their young maiden to a lord  
 Of broad rich acres, and deep-dyed ill-fame,  
 Plague-dabbled ermine, and smirched coronet;  
 Her a demure priest, silver syllabled,  
 Profaning holiest word and ordinance,  
 Offered before the altar to low gods  
 Of Pelf, Position, Power. The sires of old,  
 Jephthah and Agamemnon, immolated,  
 Weeping, fair daughters for the common weal,  
 And those pure virgins bowed the patient head,  
 Young victims aureoled with martyr fire;  
 But these, degenerate, degrade their child,  
 Starved on base offal-maxims of the world,  
 Yea, prostitute her heart to infamy,  
 Hunting their hollow bubbles of ill greed!  
 Yonder, for guerdon of a lifelong toil,  
 That heeds no hunger of the infinite soul,  
 Faint parents watch their little ones devoured  
 By famine; for the scanty wage,  
 That serves for summer shelter, fails to shield  
 From searching winter blasts of accident,  
 Old age, or illness; then the poor must beg,  
 Or steal, or starve, and watch their children die.

But are not indignation, and deep ruth,  
 Baffled recoil, loud passionate appeal  
 From earth's confusion to a starry sphere  
 Of holier Order, mirrored in the soul,  
 Faint and aloof, are they not very God?

More than ill-breathing nightmares, and dull  
 coils

Of gorged contentment, or the infinite Void,  
 Thronged with fair semblance? Yea, by  
 right divine,

These are but slaves, and those commanding  
 kings;

They travail till the God be formed in man;  
 Yea, realms of rapine, limbos, are in labour,  
 Till very God be born within their womb.

The Soul compels rude rebels of the night,  
 Passions, Ambitions, Evil aim, Denial,  
 To hew wood and draw water for Her need;  
 All kingdoms crowned Her in the Heavens  
 of old;

Hers are the glory, and predominant power!  
 O'er you lemures, vampires, and grim ghouls,  
 The tranquil Queen moves, ruling turbulent  
 tides

Of human tempest, and the outer deep  
 Of your wild, heaving, dark dominion.

Infernal empires, billowing in gloom,  
 Altho' you rise athwart the calm pale orb,  
 Foamingly threatening her soft sweet face,  
 Ye feel the mild monitions of her eye!  
 And Faith hath power to compass her own  
 Vision,

Herself the fair fruit come to birth in us,  
 Earliest green point of the flower to be.

Idlers indifferent, prosperous, full-fed,  
 On well-worn usage easefully reclined  
 In vasty mansion; jostlers for more gold,  
 Or place, or power, in senate, change, and  
 church,

Immersed in worship, sport, or spectacle,  
 Methought I visited; poor homeless folk  
 Cowering unclothed by temple-porch and  
 palace,

With pining babes half-hidden in their rags,  
 While painted harlots flaunt their own pollu-  
 tion,

And forms more formidable prowl; theyskulk,  
 Desperate, plotting cruel desperate deeds  
 For private greed, or violent overthrow  
 Of that immense, hoar, consecrated Pile,  
 Where the jammed People standing scarce  
 may breathe,

Wide-mouthed aware of pomp and priest and king.

Then I looked stifling up to the earth-pall ;  
A death-shroud, one contamination, wrapped  
Round human plague, thick-woven of sin  
and sorrow !

Yet there be wafts of heavenlier effluence  
From the ten righteous Abraham desired.  
For Human Love moves in the lazar-house  
Of our poor planet, gentle minister.  
The cloudy pall moves, lifting from the city ;  
Sun gleams through rents in it on her thronged  
life,  
On tower and temple, and the lordly river.

Lo ! little children playing on the green,  
Or noisome alley, changed to paradise  
By young enchantments of fresh fantasy ;  
In airy school they learn, with happy faces :  
There note the humanising spectacle,  
Grave for life-lore, and for amusement gay :  
While kindly Opulence with aching Need  
Shares verier wealth than gold, the gentle  
lady,

Whom we on earth name Mercy, bends to  
heal

A mortal Pain, who turns to kiss Her shadow.  
And hear sweet Music hovering like a dove  
Over the weary ! Yet are all but gleams  
In lurid fume that suffocates the sun ?  
This huge black whirlpool of the city sucks,  
And swallows, and encroaches evermore  
On vernal field, pure air, and wholesome  
heaven—

A vast dim province, ever under cloud,  
O'er whose immeasurable unloveliness  
His own foul breath broods sinister, like Fate.  
And yet what wealth of wisdom, and rich lore,  
Swift lightnings of keen-edged encountering  
wit,

Fair tribute of all periods, all lands,  
Wide walls alive with hues of genius !  
Our pale West here meets mellow Orient,  
Flowing with warm-hued raiment, redolent  
Of perfume, eyed with slow luxurious fire.  
All realms send sons, elect ambassadors,  
For interchange of many-moulded mind.

And rarely, deep indrawn from the mad  
whirl

Of dissonant motion round me, face to face,  
'Mid comelier architecture than our own,  
I find me with the venerable shades,  
Mankind consents to honour—legislator,  
Iconoclast, bard, warrior, king, queen :  
Richard the Lion, Alfred, the Black Prince,  
That armoured conqueror of Agincourt,  
And She who gained a nobler victory,  
By Calais, over a revengeful heart,  
True queen, true woman, Mercy's minister ;  
Mailed knight, with baron proud from  
Runnymede,  
Dan Chaucer, Wyclif, Cromwell, Hampden,  
Charles.

There speeds boy Chatterton, elate with hope,  
There droops, pale, sullen, near the agony !  
Shakespeare, the human ; Milton, ocean-  
toned ;  
Ariel Shelley ; Byron, the volcano ;  
Our voice of hills and lakes : the luminous-  
eyed  
Young Greek, astray in our dim century !

Beyond the Saxon, Norman, Roman town  
(For each whelms, founds itself on what fore-  
ran ;  
So all lie deep-entombed beneath the stones),  
Where London roars, there slept the lonely  
wild,  
Where London roars, the lonely wild will  
sleep.  
Ourselves are founded on the lives before,  
Founding the future ; will the world grow wise  
With all the long-accumulating years ?

A train sped on a road banked o'er the  
lanes,  
And courts ignoble of our monstrous East ;  
Wherefrom glad children, laden with spring  
flowers,  
Fluttered white kerchiefs cheering ; at a  
window  
Of one of those poor dwellings a pale child  
Waved his lean arm responsive ; his hurrah  
Was drowned in theirs ; they saw not the  
wan smile

Of that seven-year-old cripple ; in a cot,  
 That seemed an orange-case disused, he lay,  
 Propped high for him to see the bright live  
 trains  
 Rush past with human freight : an ancient  
 dame  
 Tended the child, his grandmother ; they two  
 Lived ever here ; the boy knew no green  
 fields ;  
 Through the long days, and late into the  
 nights  
 (When her frail charge lay peacefully in sleep,  
 And when to wakeful voyagers by rail  
 The shadow of the love-invented cot  
 On the illumined blind appeared to be  
 That of a little coffin ; ah ! great Love !  
 Wilt thou soon lay the lad in such a cot ?)  
 The old woman plied her scissors and her  
 needle  
 For a poor pittance ; one rich offering  
 Of sweet burned incense, all her selfless soul  
 Is offered up to Heaven for the child.  
 The dame hath taught her helpless one to  
 read,  
 Buying him Noah's ark and picture-book,  
 And she hath helped him order on the floor  
 A mimic park with turfs from a lark's cage,  
 Wherein are planted perpendicular  
 Thin sticks of deal, their foliage woolly  
 shreds  
 From old frayed borders of the grandame's  
 gown ;  
 A baking-dish contains the mimic lake,  
 And, swimming there, a dinted bird, once  
 white.<sup>30</sup>

These are unbeautiful ; the neighbouring  
 scene  
 Affronts our every sense ; Plague, Famine lurk  
 With heads obscene, with sly lack-lustre eyes,  
 Couching at every threshold motionless.  
 Yet, here, yea, here, not where the lark  
 pours joy,  
 Evermore pouring ecstasies in air  
 Of rapturous blue, nor where a throistle wafts  
 His incense of clear notes upon the breeze,  
 O'erquavered by soft shadows of young  
 leaves ;

Nor where, with agelong rapture, holy men  
 Dream swooning visions in Himālayan  
 snows—  
 Not there, but here I find me at Heaven's  
 gate,  
 Open to let the eternal Sun shine through  
 On our sad Earth ; fair angels come and go  
 In this poor hovel, for Queen Love lives here,  
 With dear handmaidens, Patience, Tender-  
 ness,  
 And her fair warrior-knight, young Fortitude.  
 Behold ! how many graceless roofs and walls  
 Are glowing with a rarer, heavenlier grace  
 From martyr-deaths, and lowly hero lives !

A boy lay suffering in hospital,  
 His members crushed and mangled by a wain,  
 Whose wheels passed o'er him playing in the  
 street.  
 Scarce can he bear the thought that he must  
 die.  
 His mother's darling ; she is kneeling near.  
 Later the father came—the man well loved  
 His little son, but he was harsh to her,  
 Paying her patient drudgery with blows.  
 " My lad, I cannot, will not part with thee !"  
 By the white bed he sobbed, to whom the  
 child :  
 " Father, they tell me I must leave you both ;  
 I feel it very hard, but I shall die  
 Content, I think, if thou wilt promise me  
 One thing before I go"—to whom the sire :  
 " Yes, if it lie within my power, lad !"  
 " Promise thou never wilt ill-use, or strike.  
 Or be unkind to mother when I'm gone !"  
 The man did promise, faltering, and then  
 Peace passing understanding, like still light,  
 Illumined the pale face of him who died.

A widow woman nursed her ingrate son  
 In his long illness to the final hour,  
 With inextinguishable tenderness,  
 He little heeding, snatching as a due  
 Love's gracious offices, a graceless churl ;  
 She had bestowed on him from birth till now  
 Through all the helpless years of his great  
 need,  
 Freely her innermost, her sacred self,

And later fair solicitudes of love  
 Still proffered ; but, a pauper of the heart,  
 A boor in spirit, he had thrown from him  
 The pure celestial jewel of high heaven,  
 Which is the substance of the throne of God.  
 Rarely he brought his earnings home to her,  
 Squandering them on transitory sense ;  
 But her clear love welled on perennial,  
 Until the man died ; then the pillow soft,  
 Whereof she had despoiled herself for him,  
 Was placed by her beneath the wasted corpse  
 Within the coffin, for she said to one,  
 " I know well that he will not want it now  
 Under his thin back, yet, sir, I shall feel it ;  
 I could not bear to rest on it to-night,  
 Knowing him laid upon the cold hard wood,  
 And he so tired, worn to skin and bone !"  
 She did not long survive the man, but when  
 She went, her heart still turned to serving  
 John.

And surely Love will work deliverance  
 In Love's own time, for time belongs to Love.

Down-trodden woman, mother, mistress,  
 wife,  
 Monotonously toiling for his weal.  
 Who slays you, swift or slowly, ye would  
 shield

Him whose vile blows deform you ; now I see  
 In you my God, who died upon the Cross,  
 I hear the seraphs choring in your heart !  
 Barren the bowers of Elysium ;  
 Our very God is born from human woe !  
 Yea, golden fruit of the Hesperides.  
 A hundred-headed, tumult-breathing Beast,  
 A dragon-chaos guards ; the Hero dares !  
 Fearlessly storms he the fell forest-hold,  
 Crag lapped in fire, or never might he find  
 And kiss Brünhild in her enchanted sleep,  
 Awakening the maid to nuptial love.  
 Nor was the Volsung found invulnerable  
 Until he bathed him in the monster's blood,  
 Whom erst he braved with his good brand,  
 and slew.

Yea, Sirius, excelling our great Sun  
 Twofold in splendour, Sirius the fair,  
 How were his mighty drift imaginable,  
 Or lordly functions in the hierarchy

Of all Sun-gods, and their obedient worlds,  
 Or offices for man, without the dark  
 Stupendous Brother-orb invisible,  
 From age to age sublime companion ?

And blest are ye, dark heralds of new dawn,  
 Rebels, who beard the tyrant, for all souls  
 Claiming free-growth to their own height,  
 with form

Predestinated from eternity.  
 So Pride, thrust back within the boundary,  
 May learn at length to recognise the Body,  
 Whereof we are but functioned cells, for fear  
 He perish isolated in the cold.

So thunders Revolution ! Hail ! unnamed,<sup>31</sup>  
 Unconsecrate Melchizedek, thou priest  
 Of the Most High God, though thou know  
 Him not,

Yea, and blasphemest idols we adore,  
 Who have usurped in Temples His great  
 Name ;

Without or sire, or mother, or descent,  
 Never enrolled among the ranks of men,  
 Among the living of thy land unknown,  
 So best to serve the people of thy love.  
 Young martyr, self-immured in a rank prison.  
 That saps the vitals, withers the rose-bloom !  
 There also fade thy fellows, delicate girls,  
 Who fondle Death with desperate white hand,  
 And with gay smile salute Annihilation,  
 Enamoured of one flame-eyed lover, Him  
 They serve with indefatigable joy,  
 Whose lofty name is Martyrdom for Man !  
 Howe'er insane or violent your aim,  
 Deniers of our Lord, I worship Him  
 Alive in you, Knights-errant of the Poor,  
 Whom His decrepit Church adores, but dead.

And yet reserve some reverence for ranks  
 Of men, who guard with dedicated lives  
 Our holy, our inalienable Past,  
 Their heads bowed low before that ancient  
 throne

Of long-descended hoar Authority !  
 These have mine honour also, for I know  
 That not one cause, but rival camps in arms  
 Hold Sons of Belial, and true friends of  
 God ;

While from loud shocks of terrible crossed  
steel  
Leaps the live flame that ministers to  
man. . . .

. . . A stately palace, whose immense  
demesne

Of vivid verdure is ablaze with bloom,  
Whose halls are animate with radiant forms  
Of picturing genius, luxuriant  
With wealth of loom, and mine, art-elevate,  
And sacred from the hopeless hands of toil.  
The windows of the lordly pile behold  
A silver water; o'er wide miles of park  
Fair antlered deer browse in the fragrant fern,  
Under huge oaks, whose agelong reverie,  
And leafy secrecies of summer sound  
Hold more than meeteth mortal ear and eye.  
But all is hushed now, save for weird, far calls  
Of owls, and plashing fountain; the lithe  
forms

Of statues on the terrace in the moon  
Are not so beautiful as living maid  
And youth, who linger under whispering leaves  
And by the flowery frondage; her light garb  
Seems airy foam, a woof of silken sheen,  
And delicate lace about her warm white  
throat.

Each leans to each with deep and dewy eyes:  
The wedding-day is near; I hear low words:  
"Was ever happiness like ours? the clock,  
Silverly chiming from the ivied tower,  
Tells how the bells will peal full soon; come  
death,

We shall have lived, my darling, we have  
lived!"

Then all was blurred; the happy vision  
faded,

As if the potion of slow-poisoning Time  
Were concentrated in one murderous draught,  
Of power to wither suddenly; I hear  
Again the troubled surge of London town.

I pass the teeming dens where herds of men,  
Shamefully heaped promiscuous, unshamed,  
Are thrust by their stern gaoler, Poverty,  
With scorn refused the luxury of Virtue.

The vision taketh small account of Time,  
For Time is creature of the mind that knows,  
Varying with it; what was shown me now?  
In a confined low garret droops a maid,  
Wearily sewing with red eyes, and pale,  
A withering flower, reft of air and light;  
But she is very beautiful; her face  
And form are moulded for young joy of love,  
Tho' the rare undulation and rich lines  
Be thwarted by a niggard nourishment,  
And the worn faded raiment be no mate  
For her moon-fair imperial loveliness.  
Deftly her needle plies; the long night wears;  
Orion solemn passeth, and hath rest;  
The weary girl may sleep not: lo! she holds  
A delicate sheeny fabric as of foam,  
A virginal rich raiment; surely this  
Should be the very garment I beheld  
Enhance the beauty of the soft betrothed  
That summer evening in the calm domain,  
And easeful pleasaunce of prosperity.  
Whose feet are on the stair? she starts; she  
quivers,

Rose-colouring; the dewy, lustrous eyes  
Flash luminous, the while she mutters low,  
"He comes: I can no more: I wrestled long!  
Why doom my prisoned youth to wither here,  
Shut from all sweet fruition of my years?  
How have I earned this? Honourable toil  
Is ever paid here with a long dull death;  
And I will live! I will be rich like her!  
And wear fine jewelled clothing, ay, be  
loved,

Adored, enjoy my life before I die!  
Ah! mother, pardon! if thou wert but here!"  
A knock: one enters: he displays rare gems,  
Whose lustre blinds the miserable den:  
He wraps her round with passionate fierce  
fire;

Delicious flame consumes her; eagerly,  
Headlong she plunges down the abyss of ruin.

Sisters, and brothers, ye who name the  
Christ,  
How may ye suffer such foul shame to be?  
We would be leisured, good, accomplished,  
wise,  
Charming, and charitable; the rank soil

That breeds the exotic is a brother's blood !  
 Inevitable ills arraign the Heavens :  
 Some wrongs accuse mankind ; we challenge  
 them.

From where our patriot sailor on his column  
 Stands, with the lion of England at his feet,  
 Among the fountains, looking toward the  
 towers,

The banded towers of Westinminster, beyond  
 Green trees, by Thames, to Lambeth, London  
 roars

Eastward, loud leagues of palaces for men  
 Who toil to accumulate, around the dome,  
 Where warrior Wellington by Nelson sleeps,  
 Flows to four towers, phantoms of the past,  
 In whose dread dungeons linger shadowy sighs  
 From ruined lives of all the slow sad years ;  
 On, where the navies largesse of world-wealth  
 Lavish on quays vociferous (yet we  
 Pine ever ailing, surfeited, unfed),  
 By that great arsenal of war-weapons,  
 Forged with tremendous clangour, to God's  
 sea.

And westward, London roars round con-  
 gregated

Palaces, where men squander. Of the crowds  
 Our eyes encounter, some are sorrowful,  
 Long unaccompanied of sweet Hope, the  
 bride,

Withering mournful ; some are jubilant,  
 Sunny and strong with youth, or strenuous,  
 Of glad demeanour ; listless, languid these ;  
 But most are weary in this Babylon,  
 Whether men idle, or contend for bubbles ;  
 The happiest are they who minister.

Beyond these regions, reaches of dim street,  
 A sullen labyrinth of ill-omened hovels :

Ah ! dull, grey, grovelling populations, ye  
 That are rank human soil, wherein we force  
 Our poor pale virtues, and our venomous sins  
 Of gorgeous growth, our proxy-piety,  
 Official food, that yields no sustenance,  
 But chokes with outworn fantasy free life,  
 What hope, O people ? Red convulsive strife  
 With those whom circumstance made masters,  
 then

Brief moaning silence under other lords ?  
 And yet what ask ye ? Sick men from a  
 feast

Rise loathing ; health can relish his poor  
 crust.

The pure soul hath her panoply of light,  
 In direst dungeon radiating heaven ;  
 Enspersed in her own atmosphere of joy  
 Sees no deformity ; while tyrants tread  
 Their marble halls, to find them torture-  
 chambers ;

A graceless prison all his fair demesne  
 To some illiberal, illustrious fool.

Perchance ye, ground to powder in God's mill.  
 May serve more than who sleep in delicate  
 death,

With rarest incense in the mummy-fold.

O whirling wheels ! O throngs of murmur-  
 ing men !

Where is the goal of infinite endeavour ?

And where your haven, O ye fleeting faces ?  
 High Westminster, like some tall ghostly  
 father

Of olden time, stands wildered, while for  
 crowds

Of modern men, swift eddying at his feet,  
 His reverend grandeur void of consolation  
 Broods ; for no warriors, consecrated kings,  
 Kings who were crowned here through the  
 centuries,

Nor bard, nor saint, emblazoned on the pane,  
 Canopied under marble in the aisle,

Whose shadowy memories haunt his heart,  
 may help.

These are unexcepted ; time trends other-  
 where ;

Their slumber is by channels long deserted !

His hoary towers, with melancholy eyes,  
 Dream in their own world, impotent for ours ;  
 Or if he speak, who may interpret now ?

He wakes in vain, who slept for centuries,  
 For he awakens in some alien world.

Doth Hope inhabit, then, the sister-pile,  
 Whose stately height hath grown to over-  
 shadow

That hoary minster ? This in sooth avails.

And yet methinks more health is in the old,  
Renewing youth from fountains of the new,  
Than in rash overthrow of all men built,  
With salt of insolence sown in holy places.

Therefore, O secular, and sacred towers,  
Confound your glories by the river-shore,  
And marry mighty tones in ordering time !  
Cathedral organ, roll insurgent sound,  
As though the archangel would arouse the  
dead !

Our firm foundations on the invisible,  
Build we the ever ampler, loftier state,  
Till unaware we walk the City of God !  
Yea, for I deem the fathers we revere,  
Shrined in cathedral glooms, embolden us  
With eyes of silent counsel, and dumb power,  
Approving backs turned on their empty tomb.  
But who may slay the irrevocable Past ?  
The Past, our venerable Sire, that girds  
Bright armour round us, like some grand old  
knight,  
With benediction sending forth fair youth  
To battle, crowning what himself began !

When England bathes in shadow, the tall  
tower

Of that great palace of the people shines,  
Shines to the midnight like a midnight sun.  
While crowned inherited incompetence,  
And while law-making men laborious  
Through long night-watches, in their golden  
chamber,

Wage wordy wars of faction, help the  
State,

The dreadful river rolls in darkness under,  
Whirling our human lights to wild witch-  
gleam !

See yellow lamps in formidable gloom  
Of both the shores, night-hearted haunts of  
men ;

Terrible water heaped about great piers  
Of arches, gliding, gurgling, ominous !  
But on the vasty parapet above  
Those Titan tunnels, ghastlier for the glare  
Of our electric mockery of moons,  
Appears a moment a fate-hunted face—  
Wan Desolation, plunging to the Void.

Then swirls a form dishonoured among gleams,  
Which eddy as light-headed ; what was man,  
With other offal flotsam, flounders, rolls.

But now for one who mused upon the bridge,  
Of pier and arch tremendous, the huge reek,  
And sin-breathed exhalations of the city,  
Transfigured by an alchemy of power,  
Burned with all colour ; the broad river rose  
Aslant horizonward, and heavenward,  
One calm aerial glory of still dream ;  
Thronged habitations on the shadowy shore  
Blend solemn, disembodied to a bloom  
Ethereal, bathed in evening ; fair enchased,  
Or diaped upon the delicate air,  
Hull, mast, sail, tiny bark, or barge, or  
steamer,

Poised darkly in mid primrose of the tide,  
Like carven fretwork on a golden shrine.  
All monstrous hostels, with interminable  
Glazed bulks that over-roof the clanging train,  
And all our builded chaos doth repent,  
Converting into beauty ; while I muse,  
The mild, and modulated cadences  
Of lemon fruit, shy violet, dove-down,  
Deepen to very pomp and festival  
Of dyes magnificent ; one diapason  
Of hues resplendent, crimson, gold, and green,  
And purple gorgeous, like robes of kings,  
Or caves of sun-illuminated sea-treasure,  
Or glories blazoned in Cathedral aisle,  
Heart 3 white lily, fruit of passion-flower,  
Or fervid eagle-eyes ; a parable,  
One nuptial-feast of marrying glow and gloom.  
A wondrous parable of life through death !

While yonder haughty heights of West-  
minster,

Where once fierce feuds of our illustrious dead  
Sleep reconciled in monumental calm,  
Mary reposing by Elizabeth,  
And where with throes of living loud debate  
Are brought to birth the still behests of  
Heaven ;

With ancient consecrated privilege  
Of lordly Lambeth on his stately sward ;  
These, and the grand dome, and the four  
grim towers,

Haunted by phantoms of long-wandering  
crime,  
And harbours thronged with navies of the  
world,  
Glow fair a moment with supernal fire.

I am on the country-side again ; but ah !  
Nor here may I escape the treacherous  
Flat viper-head that lurks behind all joy.  
The World god-fronted hath a dragon-train,  
Long loathsome coil, gold-cinctured, with a  
heart,  
Now hot with love or hate, and now dead-  
cold.  
Yea, under budding pear and cherry tree,  
Preluding silent anthems of white bloom,  
Under a nest of mellow-throated thrush,  
Who warbles out his soul to a soft mate,  
Her own warmth luring life from the frail  
egg ;  
Here one deemed woman drowns a trustful  
child,  
Pleading in vain, for she is all one stone  
To his close clinging, wild, appealing woe.  
Where did she drown him ? Whence the  
bubbling cry ?  
In a pure lingering stream, that mirrors well  
Fresh grass and flowers, whose home is on  
his bank ;  
He takes them to his heart, he shrines them  
there !  
Nor ever bolt leaps shattering from the blue ;  
A plummy pomp of cloud in azure air  
Sails undismayed ; Earth shudders not for  
shame ;  
Nor yawns to engulph her — gulphs the  
innocent.  
Only a zephyr dimples with young joy  
Yon vivid verdure overstarred with gold !

Poor paralytic human Pity ! what  
Canst thou in this confusion ? Wring thy  
hands,  
And weep, like Rachael, for thy little ones,  
Or fumble thy conjectural remedies,  
That may be poisons, and experiment !  
A human sire, on whom a child relies,  
Asleep in perfect trust upon his heart —

Would he not give his body to be burned,  
And all his soul to Satan for the child ?  
Death shall devour it, even in his arms,  
Or Ruin rend, he lying impotent !

But Thou, O Father, if these are Thy Sons,  
Canst Thou behold them prostrate in such  
plight  
Unmoved ? nor rend the heavens and come  
down ?  
Or art Thou sleeping, on a journey, or  
Hast Thou deserted these Thine orphans,  
Lord ?  
Nay, who but Heaven commissioneth dim  
Plague,  
Death, Sorrow, Madness, dire ancestral Sin,  
Cancer, long torments unimaginable,  
And all the brood of ever-ravaging ills,  
That devastate mankind ? No bribe can tame  
them,  
Ungessed, innumerable, invincible.  
So clings some awful beast to a faint fawn,  
Galloping maddened o'er the indifferent wild.  
By wells, and pleasant pasturage the Doom  
Cowers in his ambush, springs from the blue  
air,  
Falls like a thunderbolt ; O men, can ye  
Rival your Mother in accomplished crime ?  
Who perpetrates what freezes the warm blood,  
Masked in light laughter, kissing while she  
stabs !  
And yet, because the still small voice within  
Reveals God more than storm, or earthquake,  
we,  
Bettering Her rude ways, give sense the lie,  
Nor will believe Her what she only seems.  
O Thou dread Silence, dumbly do we bow ;  
In silence we commend Thy world to Thee.  
  
Most awful Spirit of the Universe !  
Kneeling before Thy throne we grovel low,  
Yea, wrestle with Thee through the long  
night hours,  
Unknowing Thy dread Name ; we will not let  
Thee go until Thou loose the cloudy fold  
From that veiled countenance ! Hath Love,  
or Hate,  
Or dead Indifference his temple there ?

Now sweet, now bitter waters, night and day,  
 Anguish and joy, strong radiant righteousness,  
 With sin malformed, and folly, motley crew,  
 Stream from Thy bosom all impartially!  
 We know not; but of old a Man who bore  
 Upon His shoulder the world's weight of woe,  
 Whom men name wisest, He announced

Thee Father,

Praying, "Not My will, but Thine own be  
 done!"

Yea, and through mystic change, or swift or  
 slow,

Within the general bosom, and in ours,  
 Faith's inarticulate reason may grow clear  
 Fair utterable vision: the wild dance,  
 The strange phantasmagory of ill-dream,  
 Named sin and sorrow, may appear birth-  
 pangs

Of life consummate, else impossible!

Therefore, dear birds, in leafy woods ye  
 warble,

And you, my children, by the rivulet  
 Play, laughing merrily, because the world  
 Is sound at heart, howe'er it seems to ail.  
 God-fronted, dragon-trained, 'tis but a marred  
 Image in souls, who travail yet ungrown,  
 Who, ruffled, slowly waver into rest.

And why we arise or fall, no mortal knows,  
 Save that by change alone the unchanged  
 abides;

Love breathes amid the ruin of red wrong.  
 For a moment only of our infinite life  
 With one wild wing-pulse cleaving earth's  
 rent air,

Oh! lift we one another from this hell  
 Of blindly-battling ignorance to God!

## EARLY LOVE

OUR early love was only dream!

Still a dream too fair for earth,  
 Hallowed in a faint far gleam,

Where the fairest flowers have birth,  
 Let it rest! no stain e'er trouble  
 Magic murmur, limpid bubble!

There two spirits in the calm

Of moonlight memory may go,  
 Finding pure refreshing balm,

When life traileth wounded, slow,  
 Along dim ways of common dust,  
 As dull lives of mortals must.

Early love, fair fount of waters,

Ever by enchantment flowing,  
 Where two snakes, her innocent daughters,  
 Were wont to swim among the blowing,  
 Wilding flowers thou knowest well,  
 In the wood of our sweet spell!

Never Fear found out the place,

Never eyes nor feet profane!  
 Of our innocent youth and grace  
 Love was born; if born to wane,  
 We will keep remembrance holy  
 From the soil of care and folly.

No weariness of life made wise,

No canker in the youngling bud,  
 No lustre failing from our eyes,  
 Nor ardour paling in the blood!  
 Neither ever seemed less fair  
 To the other playing there.

Still asleep, we drift asunder,

Who met and loved but in a dream:  
 Nor kissing closely, woke to wonder  
 Why we are not what we seem!  
 Fairy bloom dies when we press  
 Wings young zephyr may caress.

Fare you well! more might have been!

Nay, we know more might not be!  
 A moment only I may lean  
 On your bosom, ere you flee,  
 Ere the weary sultry day  
 Hide my morning and my May!

Yet a fairy fountain glistens

Under soft moon-lighted leaves,  
 And my wistful spirit listens

For a voice that glows and grieves,  
 Breathing, when my heart would fail,  
 Youth from yonder fairy vale,  
 Where sings a nightingale.

LOVE HIDING

LOVE was playing hide and seek,  
And we deemed that he was gone,  
Tears were on my withered cheek  
For the setting of our sun ;  
Dark it was around, above,  
But he came again, my love !

Chill and drear in wan November,  
We recall the happy spring,  
While bewildered we remember  
When the woods began to sing,  
All alive with leaf and wing.  
Leafless lay the silent grove ;  
But he came again, my love !

And our melancholy frost  
Woke to radiance in his rays,  
Who wore the look of one we lost  
In the faraway dim days :  
No prayer, we sighed, the dead may move,  
Yet he came again, my love !

Love went to sleep, but not for ever,  
And we deemed that he was dead ;  
Nay, shall aught avail to sever  
Hearts who once indeed were wed ?  
Garlands for his grave we wove,  
But he came again, my love !

ROSE AND BUTTERFLY

A BUTTERFLY flew to the heart of a rose,  
Ah ! more than he longed for the flower  
will yield !  
Soft fans of Ariel close, unclose,  
Unknowing how long he may dwell in our  
field.

He is here ! he is yonder ! the rose will weep,  
" If you may not abide with us, child of air,  
For ever enfolded in memory sleep,  
Here in the heart of me, oh my fair ! "

Chill wind breathes, with a mist and a  
rain,  
Shedding the sweet petals, every one ;  
Now where is the heart of the flower so  
fain,  
And the winged blue summer elf, where is  
he gone ?

Rose-lover, remember, though delicate wings,  
Deep-dyed in a wonderful azure of heaven,  
Be turned into dust of inanimate things,  
Very soon from your own life you will be  
forgiven !

SWING-SONG

SWING ! swing !  
Birds in the budding wood, birds on the wing  
Fill sweet soft air with carolling ;  
The woods no more contain their glee,  
Joy brims over on every tree  
In a flutter of leaves hilariously,  
Swing ! swing !

Early primroses awake from sleep,  
In many a dewy dale they peep ;  
Lo ! populous land, far field and grove,  
Aerial as clouds that move  
In labyrinthine drifts above !  
Swing ! swing !

Anemone-flakes of a veined snow  
Lie over the sunny herbs below,  
Lie over brown bents, woven and wet,  
Where yellow-eyed white violet  
With moth and strawberry hath met,  
Swing ! swing !

Spring waves her youngling leaves for token  
Dark winter's deadlier spells are broken ;  
The firry roofs, with low sea-sound,  
Welcome to their calm profound  
The dove's long call in a love-sound,  
Swing ! swing !

Baby-boy lies on a sisterly arm  
 Of little maid Mary, safe from harm,  
 Little boy Willy will push the pair,  
 Hark! how they laugh as they rush through  
     the air!  
 All the young world laughs, oh, how fair!  
     Swing! swing!

### MAGIC-LANTERN

I WAS within a darkened chamber,  
     Full of children small;  
 Upon my knees I felt him clamber,  
     One of the least of all,  
     Answering my call.

He was a baby of the people,  
     Nor aught of him I knew;  
 Only the shadow of one steeple  
     Abode upon us two;  
     His arms around me grew.

Quaint figure, battle, bark, snow-mountain,  
     The lantern-wizardry,  
 Arouse joy's hidden silver fountain  
     To pretty wondering glee,  
     Plashing full merrily.

Albeit nor now, before, nor after,  
     Mine eyes beheld the boy,  
 When he so pealed with innocent laughter,  
     Methought my own, my joy,  
     Awhile with me did toy.

Athwart the drear unwarmed abysses  
     Of all the later years,  
 He leaned awhile from angel blisses,  
     To calm my foolish fears,  
     To kiss away my tears.

### THE TEMPLE OF SORROW<sup>32</sup>

THE Minster glory lies engulfed in gloom,  
 With mournful music throbbing deep and low,  
 And all the jewelled joy within Her eyes  
 Slumbers suffused; the saint, the warrior,

On tomb recumbent, kneeling panoplied,  
 Blend far-away mysterious presences  
 With a wide-seething multitude, alive  
 Through all the pillared grandeur of the  
     nave,

A human sea; the gorgeous full pomp  
 Of civil, militant, imperial pride,  
 And sacerdotal splendour, cloth of gold,  
 Chalice bejewelled, silks imbued with morn,  
 Flows in blue twilight of a perfumed air,  
 Flows, flashing into momentary gleam  
 By altar and shrine, for lustre of the lamps,  
 Silver and gold suspended, or mild shine  
 Of tall white wax around a central Night  
 In the mid-transept; there the Catafalque,  
 The Shadow dominates, reigns paramount  
 O'er all the temple; 'tis the hollow heart,  
 Dispensing Darkness through the frame supine  
 Of that colossal Cross, which is the Fane.  
 The huge vault under yawneth, a deep wound,  
 Filled full with Horror; Death abideth there:  
 Ay, with our lost Ideals, our lost Loves,  
 Baffled Aim, palsied Faith, Hope atrophied!  
 All the circumfluent glory-glow of Life  
 Mere tributary to the awful throne  
 Of this dread Power; all cast their crowns  
     before It.

Yea, as blithe waters from the abysmal womb  
 Of caverned Earth dance buoyant into Day,  
 So here from fountains of primeval Night  
 In very deed Life seemeth effluent.

And some there be most honoured in the  
     crowd,  
 From whom illustrious prince, with emperor  
 And noble, stand obeisantly aside.  
 Who are they? for they wear no bravery,  
 Nor badge of high estate within the realm,  
 Whose garb uncourtly sombre shows and  
     mean.  
 No confident bearing, claiming deference,  
 As of right full-conceded, suns itself  
 Proudly on these; we judge them of the herd  
 Of rugged toilers, whom the stroke of Fate  
 Despoils of floral honours and green leaves,  
 Fells for rough use, not leaves for leisured  
     grace,  
 Or putting forth the loveliest that is theirs.

Lowly their port, whose dull and earthward  
eyes,  
Heavy with weeping, droop beneath rude  
brows,  
Whose light is with their heart, quenched in  
the abyss

That holds their best beloved, torn from them  
In fierce embraces of devouring fire ;  
Whose souls were so inextricably involved  
With these that perished, in the ghastly  
fall

They too were wrenched low from the living  
light

Of placid, self-possessed familiar day  
Down to a desolate disconsolate wild,  
Haunt of grim Madness, hollow Doubt,  
Despair :

Only the dead, more happy, seem to glide  
Lower to nether caverns of cool sleep.

Grief is their patent of nobility ;  
Sorrow the charter of their right to honour.  
Smitten to earth, behold them cowering,  
Mocked, buffeted, spurned, spat upon, effaced  
Under the blood-red executioner,  
Whom some name Nature, and some God,  
the Lord.

These do but threaten feebly with a mouth  
Or hand, more feeble than a delicate beast,  
Lashed for hell-torment by a learned man,  
Lashed for hell-torment in the torture-trough ;  
The unregarded Sudras of the world,  
Bleeding to slow death from an inward wound,  
Deep and immedicable evermore.

To these the proud and prosperous of earth  
Pay reverent homage ! it is marvellous !  
And yet no marvel ! such fate-stricken men  
Are armed, and robed imperially with awe !  
Who flame sublime to momentary wrath,  
Peal with mad mirth, then grovel impotent ;  
Who affirm not their own selves, who falter  
lost,  
Like foam blown inland on the whirlwind's  
wing

From ocean, there dissolving tremulous  
Where kindred foam vanished only now,  
So they in the lapsed being of their dead.

They are one with these they cherished and  
adored,  
Not separate, individual any more :  
Lies are they of Sorrow, pale crowned  
Queen  
Over man's miserable mad universe.

What might have been fair Body grows to  
Soul :

From false-appearing palace halls of sense  
They are delivered, into mournful worlds  
Of Peradventures all unfathomable,  
Forebodings infinite, wild hope, surmise,  
Faith, love, sweet longing ; yea, they are  
disturbed

From dull content with earth's inanities  
By revelation of what hollow hearts,  
And loathly shapes they hide ; afire with thirst,  
Now will they sound the eternal deeps within  
For living water, clouded and disused,  
Cumbered with ruin ; their dull eyes are  
roused

From low rank plains to interrogate the height  
Of perilous attainment or endeavour,  
Where snows hold high communion with stars,  
Where from aerial eyrie sails the eagle,  
Calm in clear air, familiar with Heaven.  
They are made free of God's eternal spirit,  
Ever abounding, inexhaustible ;  
Consumed, that they themselves may truly be.

Behold ! the Minster cruciform and grand,  
Grows human, more than human, as I muse,  
The Holy House of Life, the Crucified !  
What seems the World, the Body of the Lord !  
Expanded arms, and frame pulsate with blood,  
Close-thronging individual lives ; His Heart,  
Death, haloed with pale anguish and desire.  
Even so the Sun eclipsed, a sable sphere,  
Is ringed around with his corona flame,  
Wherein appear weird members of red fire.  
But as the Sun behind this ominous orb,  
That is the spectral shadow of our moon,  
Smiles evermore beneficent, so Love  
Veils Him in gloom sepulchral for awhile,  
That we who sound the abysses of Despair  
May weave pure pearls, Her awful bosom  
hides,

Into a coronal for our pale brows,  
And He Himself, descending to the deep,  
Bearing our burden, may win lovelier grace  
Of Love's own tears, which are the gems of God.

Ever the plangent ocean of low sound  
Fills all with midnight, overwhelms my heart.  
Lit tapers faint around the Catafalque,  
And fair-wrought lamp in sanctuary and shrine.

The wan expanse seems labouring confused  
With what feels like some glutinous chill mist,  
Close cobweb-woof; the great Cathedral quakes,

As from sick earthquake throes; the pillars tall  
Heave, like huge forest-peers, that agonise  
In tides of roaring tempest: will the pile  
Vanish anon to assume an alien form?

For all the pillars hurtle aloft to flame  
Flamboyant, cloven, pallid, while the roof  
Reels riven; yet there is not any sound.  
Lo! every Christ on every crucifix  
Glares with the swordblade glare of Anti-christ!

While on the immense-hewn flanking masonry,  
Scrawled, as by finger supernatural,  
As in Belshazzar's banquet-hall of old,  
Behold the "*Mene! mene!*" but the realm  
Divided is the royal realm, the soul!  
The guilty soul, ingorged by the dim fiend  
Of loathsome, limbless bulk, Insanity!  
In dusk recesses how the shadows wax  
Palpable, till they palpitate obscene,  
Clinging, half-severed; our sick souls are ware  
Of some live Leprosy, that heaves and breathes

Audibly in the impenetrable gloom.

Hear ye the moans of muffled agony  
By yonder altars of the infernal aisle?  
Marmoreal pavements slippery with blood!  
While all the ghastly-lit ensanguined space  
Quickening teems with foul abnormal births;  
Corse faces scowling, wound about with shrouds,

Sniffing thick orgy fumes of cruelty,  
Steal out, or slink behind in the shamed air.

Vast arteries of the dilating pile  
Pulsate with ever denser atom-lives  
Unhappy; do mine eyes indeed behold  
Those holy innocents, whom she of yore,  
The Voice in Ramah, wept so bitterly,  
Rachael, sweet spirit-mother of their race?  
They are holy innocents of many a clime,  
And many a time, some murdered yesterday,  
And some still languishing in present pain:  
Dumb women, with marred faces eloquent,  
Hold their wan hands; while all around,  
beneath

Among their feet, what seems a harried crowd  
Of gentle beings, who are man's meek friends.  
They in the reeking shadow yonder fawn  
Upon dyed knees of things in human shape,  
All hell's heat smouldering in lurid eyes,  
And Cain's ensanguined brand upon their brow,

Who on Christ-altars, prostitute to sin,  
Offer these innocents to fiends whose names,  
Obsequious to the inconstant moods of man,  
Vary elusive, and deluding; now  
They are called Moloch, Baal, Ashtaroth,  
Hatred, Revenge, War, Lust, Greed, Might-  
is-Right,

Now Church, the Truth, the Virgin, or the Christ,

But in a later time Expediency,  
Weal of Man, Nature, Lust of Curious Lore.  
The accursed oblation of fair alien lives,  
None of their own, they pour to satiate  
The hydra-headed, demon brood obscene.  
These are devoured with ever subtler pangs  
Cunningly heightened, fuelled, nursed, prolonged

By cold, harsh hearts, one adamant to woe,  
Or cruel, infamous appetite for pain.  
Ay, and of horrors loathlier than these  
The verse dares name not, thrust on beautiful  
Maidens and babes defenceless, of such fates  
The God-deserted souls are gluttonous—  
All Nature pales at Satan's carnival!

Who are the lost souls? Legion is their name.

Noble, pope, cardinal, king, refuse vile  
Of crime-infested cities. I behold

Borgia, Caligula, Napoleon,  
 Marat, De Retz, and he that did to death  
 The royal child, who heard the angels call  
 Him home, soft singing, dying, ere he died.  
 And some are here who cumber earth to-day  
 Flesh-girt; their name shall not profane the  
 page.

There go seducers, they who lightly break  
 Warm simple hearts who trust them: there  
 are some

Who wither women slowly with harsh looks,  
 Ill words, or blows, inflamed, obsessed by  
 fiends,

Wearing the semblance of a flask of fire.  
 Yonder fair dames white-bodied, and dark-  
 souled!

Mothers we find, who can withhold unshamed  
 The high and holy dues, that all beside  
 Of animated nature punctually,  
 With rapturous devotion, consecrates,  
 The dear debt to the fruit of our own womb,  
 What strength owes to dependent feebleness,  
 Reason full-orbed to shyly-opening sense,  
 Confided and confiding: even now  
 Their mothers gave themselves for these,  
 and God

Bestows Himself on every living thing  
 For ever: these will starve, or drown their  
 babes,

Enthral them to a ghastlier than death,  
 That he may work on them his loathly will,  
 Corrupting soul and body. Drop the veil!  
 All here, foul traitors! all betrayed the trust  
 Nature imposed, while only dyed less deep,  
 Who, passing, drawled, "Am I my brother's  
 keeper?"

White victims, immolated for the world!  
 Ye tyrants, ye alone are miserable!  
 For whom Hate hath left loving, though a  
 beast

Is nearer God than you, removed from Him  
 By all the hierarchies of all worlds!  
 But these have fallen to abyssms of pain,  
 And you to sloughs of inmost infamy,  
 That all the spheres may learn for evermore  
 The treachery of sweet ways that are not Love.  
 Yet if some God be lingering in you,

Your own eternal selves consenting not  
 (Which are by lapse, and by recovery),  
 Touching the lowest deep ye shall recoil!  
 When in the furnace heated sevenfold  
 More than the wont, fierce furnace of God's  
 wrath,

Blasted, ye shrivel, your inhuman pride  
 Stern, stubborn metal swooning to weak air  
 In the white heat of Love's intolerable,  
 Ah! then will not the innocence ye wronged,  
 Leaving her own bliss for you, fly from  
 heaven

To heal you by forgiveness? May it be!

Yea, there are fleeting gleams from the  
 All-fair,

Playing of children, larks, and lovers gay,  
 Beautiful image, grand heroic deed,  
 Cheery content; but ah! the grim World-  
 woe

Absorbs all vision, overwhelms the heart!  
 A few, with seraph pity in clear eyes,  
 And flashing swords retributive unsheathed,  
 Sore-pressed and wounded, wrestle with the  
 foe,

Defeated, slain, delivering; while aloft  
 We seize anon some glimpses of august,  
 Benignant countenances, with white wings,  
 As of Heaven's host invisible drawn up  
 For battle; but I know not who prevail.  
 A few pale stars in chasms of wild storm!  
 Aliens, alas! no potentates of ours.  
 We are in the power of Darkness and Dismay,  
 Anguishing God-forsaken on the cross!

Yea, sons of Belial with jaunty jeer  
 Ask where Thou hidest, Lord! the Avenger!  
 God!

Devils a priestly scare to them, who know not  
 Devils allure them blind into the pit.  
 Could they but hear low ghastly mirth con-  
 vulse

Shadowy flanks of these live Plagues in air!

Mine eyeballs seared with horror, and my  
 heart

One writhing flame, I prayed that I might die,  
 And lay me down to sleep with *him* for ever!  
 A sevenfold darkness weighs upon my soul:

I hear no groans, no music ; all is still,  
Even as the grave: one whispers of the Dawn:  
Once I surmised the morning grey, not

now:

Nor in the chancel, whose wide wakeful orb,  
Solemnly waiting, ever fronts the East,  
Nor in the cold clerestories of the nave.  
One whispers of the lark ; I hear no bird.  
And yet I know the seraph eyes of Dawn  
Find in her last, lone hollow the veiled Night.

Hearken ! a long, low toll appals the gloom !  
Like a slow welling blood from a death-wound  
In the world's heart, that never will be  
stunched,  
Crimsoning the void with waste, expense of  
pain !

Another, and another, vibrating !  
A phantom bell tolls in the abysmal dark  
The funeral of all living things that be.  
I, turning toward the Catafalque, desire,  
Plunging within the gulf, to be no more. . . .

When, lo ! some touch as of a healing hand.  
For while I knew the mourners only saw  
Flowers on fair corpses and closed coffin-lid,  
I grew aware of souls regenerate  
Afar, sweet spirits raimented in white,  
Who leaned above the Terror with calm eyes ;  
And for a moment their purged vision cleared  
Earth-humours from mine own, till I beheld  
No deadly Dark—a lake of living Light,  
A mystic sphere, the Apocalyptic main !  
Heaving with happiness that breathes a home  
For all dear spirits of the faded flowers  
Outrageous men have pulled and thrown  
away ;

Clouds in blue air reflected in a mere,  
Or roseflush in rose-opal, a shy dawn  
In lakes at morning, so the souls appeared.

My little children, do I find you here ?  
All here ! Among you smiles our very own.  
Each little one hath, nestled in his bosom,  
A delicate bird, or elfin animal.  
White-clustered lilies, beautiful as morn,  
In wayward luxury of love's own light  
Eddying, abandoned to love-liberty !

Joy-pulses of young hearts unsulliable  
Weave warbling music, a low lullaby.  
I fancy they have syllabled a song :

We are fain, are fain,  
Of mortal pain,  
We are fain of heavenly sorrow,  
As a gentle rain,  
She will sustain,  
Wait only till to-morrow !

Among death-pearls  
Of dewy curls,  
O little ones in anguish !  
The Lord hath kissed,  
I would ye wist  
For all the world ye languish !

The loveless world  
Lies love-impearled  
From innocence weeping ;  
Wan wings be furled,  
And you lie curled  
In Love's warm haven sleeping.

For when ye know  
What glories flow  
For all from childly sorrow,  
A flower will blow  
From your wan woe  
Within the wounded furrow.

We are fain, are fain  
Of mortal pain,  
We are fain of heavenly sorrow ;  
As a gentle rain  
She will sustain,  
Wait only till to-morrow !

So pure, pellucid fays enjoy the calm  
Of summer seas, and woven waterlights  
In faëry cavern, where the emerald heart  
Lies heaving, or blue sheen on a warm  
wave.  
And ye are fair-surrounded with lost Love,  
Celestial Vision, vanished Hope, Desire,  
Lovelier recovered, gloriously fulfilled  
With a Divine fulfilment, more than ours.

There, in the midst, the likeness of a Lamb,  
That had been slain, whose passion heals our  
hurt,  
Wearing a thorn crown, breathing into bloom!  
Lo! if ye listen intently by the light,  
Ye hear a winnowing of angel wings,  
Nearing, or waning: while from far away,  
I' the Heart of all, what revelation falls? . . .  
A sound, oh marvel! like a sound of tears!

Pain ever deepens with the deepening life,  
Though fair Love modulate the whole to joy.  
A myriad darkling points of dolorous gloom  
Startle to live light; subtle infinite veins  
Of world-wide Anguish glow, a noonlit leaf.

All vanish: there is dawn within the fane;  
Born slowly from the wan reluctant gloom  
Conquering emerges a grand Cross of Gold,  
And all the nations range around serene.

### THE GEMONIAN STAIRS

ONLY a slave in Rome of old,  
A slave for whom none cares!  
Slaughtered in dungeon deeps, and rolled  
Down the Gemonian stairs;  
Insulted, marred, exposed to view,  
With other human lumber,  
There in the Forum, where the Roman con-  
course grew  
Around his mortal slumber.  
There in the Forum, by the mighty walls,  
And columns hero-crowned,  
Whose mourning voice upon the slumberer  
calls?  
The whine of a poor hound!  
He will not leave the swarthy clay,  
He licks the rigid face;  
Harsh-laughing, stern men in long-robed  
array  
Gather about the place:  
One pitying hath offered bread:  
The dog but lays it down  
Before the dumb mouth of the master dead;  
Whose body later thrown

In turbid Tiber's flood he follows,  
Borne headlong by the river,  
To lift it from the strong, loud gulf that  
swallows,  
Struggling, till both have sunk for ever.

A gleam is for a moment cast  
Over oblivion:  
The dead slave, whose dog holds him fast,  
Drifts, passes,—all are gone. . . .  
. . . Behold! yon broken-hearted hare,  
With hounds and hunters after her!  
And sweet, shy poet-birds of air,  
Startling from man the murderer!  
And seals we flay for their sleek fur!

Ah! what a wail of agony is torn  
From all these innocent martyr-races,  
Writhing beneath man's cruel scorn,  
Whose tyrannous hell distorts their faces!  
A cloud of shame clothes earth forlorn,  
Shrouds her among the starry spaces.

### THALATTA

WHEN Love is fading from thy path, a faint  
remembered gleam,  
Whose wondrous glory crowned thy crest in  
youth's triumphal morn;  
When Friendship yields a willow-wand—  
once, in Love's generous dream,  
Leaned on with all thy weight of soul, defy-  
ing doubt and scorn,  
Once deemed inviolable, divine, an oaken  
staff, a stay,  
Never to fail thee at thy need in all the  
perilous way;  
When thou art tossed from surge to surge, a  
helpless waif of ocean,  
While hell-born lusts and base-born gusts  
befool thee with vain motion;  
When foolish wants and angers in ignoble  
eddies whirl  
A human spirit, formed to front God's glory  
unashamed:

Nor any Cause colossal, like a catapult, may hurl  
To splendid goals all powerful souls, chafing,  
unloved, unnamed :

Then, poet, seek alone resounding hollows  
of the sea,  
And plunge thy sullen soul in ocean's grand  
immensity !

Dare to scale the water-mountains ! let  
them topple in loud ruin  
O'er thee, lusty swimming from cliff-harbour'd  
sandy coves ;

Though stress of tides impetuous threaten  
thine undoing,

Or violent swirl of undertow, where seething  
emerald moves

Around rude reefs and promontories, menace  
with swift death,

Confront the glorious wild Power, who plays  
with human breath !

Yea, let thy reckless shallow dare seas rushing  
round the caves,

Smite with straining oar the kindling heavy  
night of waves !

Climb the sea-crag, hand and foot, little  
careful of a fall !

Storm shall be thy requiem, fairy foam thy pall.  
Ah ! mighty boisterous blown breath, your  
siren song for me !

I quaff exhilarating draughts of wine from  
forth the sea,

Soft seething masses of fair froth luring  
deliciously !

Vaporous blast ! voice of vast long sibilant  
sea-thunder !

Bellowing explosions in abysmal cavern-halls !  
Storm my sense with sound imperial, with a  
joy sublime and wonder !

Throned aloft in perilous places unto me the  
Mother calls.

Hear Her ! tremble not ! but echo to the  
glowing spirit's core ;

It is Her voice ; Her sons rejoice ; they shout  
to Her again :

By sacred river-fountains, in the desert blast,  
and roar

Of bounding cataracts, in forest, by foam-  
mountains of the main,

In the grand Atlantic chaos, in his elemental  
war,

She converses ; I have heard Her ; I would  
hearken evermore !

Ye, my brothers, loved and worshipp'd ; all  
your music rolls with Hers !

Human sounds inform the wind that like a  
trumpet stirs !

. . . Verily I deem I hear above the tumult  
of the blast,

That takes my breath, and dashes all the  
salt spray over me,

Nor the sea-mew's cry, nor wind's wail,  
. . . eerie tones of some

who passed,  
Wailing in the wind's wail, shadows drifting  
desolately !

For they say the drowned must wander on  
the cliffs or on the wave,

Where the fatal moment plunged them in  
their " wandering grave."

Travelling mountain range, following moun-  
tain range !

Now the foremost wavering green crest begins  
to smoke ;

Breaks at one place, and suffers dark pre-  
cipitous change,

Arching slowly, solemnly ; under where it  
broke

A heavy shadow haunteth the grim wall ; till  
emerald,

All the cliff falls over, tumbles a dead weight  
Of crushed and crashing water

. . . yonder unenthralled,  
A monstrous buffalo in headlong strong  
tumultuous hate,

Plunging wild hatred upon the rock ! immense  
white tongues of fire

Are hurled around, enshroud, envelop with  
a cloud ;

Lo ! where springs to Heaven a fairy fretted  
spire !

Or is it a wan warrior's arms thrown up in  
death's despair ?

Death-white, baffled in grey air ! . . .  
Shattered upon his iron Doom in armoured  
onset there !

Niagaras upthundering, foamy avalanches,  
 Beetling, flickering huge crags of seething  
 snowy spume,  
 Wherein are caverns of green tint among  
 pale coral branches,  
 And white comets 'thwart more shadowy  
 froth-precipice's gloom!  
 Dark founded isles evanish in the flying  
 mountain tomb;  
 Albeit their wave-sculptured forms defiantly  
 abide  
 Under grey vapours hurrying o'er the sombre  
 tide:  
 Torn from parent shores, around their pillowed  
 isolation  
 Ocean revelling roars with terrible elation!

Afar, in the dull offing of a furrowed sullen sea,  
 O'er yon rock-rooted Pharos rises awfully,  
 Like a Phantom, rises slowly a white cloud,  
 Scales the lofty lanthorn where three human  
 hearts are bowed,  
 Bowed awhile, involved within the Sea-Plume  
 that ascends,  
 Swallowing a hundred feet of granite ere it  
 bends.

Behold! the sweep of mighty crags, whose  
 league-long fortress front,  
 Whose frowning granite arc defies with stature  
 tall and steep  
 Ocean's embattled billows: these have borne  
 the brunt  
 Of terrible assaults! the cannon thunders,  
 and a leap  
 Of smoke ascends the ramparts of a breached  
 and broken keep,  
 At each discharge:

The Titan targe hath

pinnacle and tower:  
 Or is the whole an organ for the surge to  
 smite with power,  
 That hath the turbulent storm-music for  
 everlasting dower?

Cathedral Heights of Titans, hewn by  
 colossal Hands,  
 Millennial ministers of flood and frost, wild  
 earthquake and fierce fire!

Lo! where a porphyry portal of the mountain  
 heart expands,  
 Portentous shadowy buttress, weather-gol-  
 dened spire;  
 There multitudinous waters wander greyly in  
 the gloom;  
 Within the high sea-sanctuary a god dispenses  
 doom;  
 In and out they wander, sombre courtiers by  
 the gate,  
 Where a dim Sea-Presence broodeth in  
 solemn sullen state—  
 Where no mortal breath dare whisper, only  
 hollow sounding surges,  
 A welter of wild waters with their melancholy  
 dirges.

Behold they rave in echoing cave their  
 wrath rent long ago,  
 Rent for a lair, where grim Despair rolls  
 shouldering to and fro;  
 To and fro they furious roll prodigious  
 boulders,  
 Rounding them like pebbles with huge  
 Atlantean shoulders.

Beyond one vast rock-sentinel guarding  
 the awful court,  
 Surrounded and o'ershadowed by walls per-  
 pendicular,  
 Before those palace-portals foamy serpents  
 huge resort,  
 Wallowing upon the wilderness, grey and  
 cold afar;  
 While among the tumbled boulders, before  
 the giant cave,  
 Robed in royal purple, royal raiment of the  
 wave,  
 Lie crunched and shattered timbers, ribs of  
 mighty ships;  
 Yea, and limbs of some who, craving one  
 more kiss of loving lips,  
 Were stifled in the violent froth, jammed  
 beneath black stones,  
 Whose glossy weed may daily with their  
 coral-crusted bones.

Tall, gaunt Phantom yonder, warding  
portals of the night,  
With silent, sweeping stature growing from  
the eastern wall,  
Lank long arms upraised, and curving with  
the vasty cavern's height,  
A beaked monster face between them, look-  
ing downward to appal!  
Art thou stone, or art thou spirit, fearful  
Shadow weird and grey,  
Daring mortals to advance beyond their  
precincts of the day?

All the cliffs are shrouded to the waist, or  
only loom  
Head and shoulders through a death-mist,  
but where the rollers boom  
Their feet are bare and stern: pale sand I  
discern  
Near their ruined grandeur; a chrysoprase  
pale green  
Narrow water isles it, with a restless flow;  
The tidal heave advances; cormorants of  
swarthy mien  
Squat on rocks about the cave, or dive in  
deeps below.

While sweet samphire, with tufted thrift,  
glows in clefts above,  
Ever and anon a sound, with ominous power  
to move,  
Wanders from the wilderness, a very mournful  
spell:  
Through the wind and wave embroilment  
ever tolls a passing bell.  
Whence the warning? what imports it?  
When I clamber, when I rest,  
It seems to breathe foreboding in a fading  
air.  
Is it from the sombre church in lonely glen  
deprest?  
There, by old cross and coffin-stone, on  
immemorial chair  
Of rude grey granite, hoary ghosts in dark  
conclave may brood:  
Nay! but the tolling tolleth from the turbu-  
lent flood,

Not from where the giants hewed them vasty  
seats of solid rock,  
Or Druid with poured human blood adored  
the Logan block:  
Not from where the Cromlech ponderous,  
and hoary cirque remain,  
Though we know no more who reared them,  
Celt or Dane, or Athelstane;  
Nor whose the mouldered dust in yonder  
urns of perished prime,  
Bard's, or warrior's, who flared a moment in  
the hollow Night of Time!  
—There on dreary moorland haunteth owl  
and raven;  
There at moonrise hoots the rocky carn, to  
confound the craven,  
While fiends are hunting dark lost souls who  
are shut out from Heaven—  
The knell is knolled by wild white arms of  
surges ramping round  
The fatal reef, where mariners are drifted to  
be drowned!  
It is the Rundlestone! He knolls for pass-  
ing human souls:  
It is the voice of Doom from forth profound  
Eternity!

Weird dragon forms, roughened in storms,  
a foamy beryl rolls  
Ever around you, dumb and blind stones,  
who confront the sky!  
I feel that in your soul there slumbers a dim  
Deity.  
. . . Were it not better to dissolve this  
chaos of the mind,  
And in the twilight of your world long con-  
solation find,  
Restoring the proud Spirit to your elemental  
Powers,  
Dying into cliff, and cloud, and snowdrift of  
sea flowers?  
. . . Vanishes the storm-rack in the gleam-  
ing West:  
A long wide chasm, glowing like a World of  
Rest,  
O'er the dusk horizon opens, whereinto  
Visionary domes arise, and towers of tender  
hue!

A holy realm of Silence, a city of deep Peace,  
Where Death leads all poor prisoners who  
have won release!

Long ranks of high surges, heaving dark  
against the bright  
Heaven, fall illumed 'thwart iron crags,  
whose frown relents to Light.

LAND'S END, 1875.

### BY THE SEA

AH! wherefore do I haunt the shadowy  
tomb,

My joyless days and nights among the dead?  
Know you not He, my radiant Sun, who fled,  
With hope uncertain soothes yon awful gloom  
Afar, upon the weltering sea's wan lead?  
Behold! faint, tremulous, ghostly gleam illumine  
The unrevealing mystery of Doom,  
Ash-pale dumb wastes, impenetrable, dread,  
O'erwhelming purple incumbent o'er the  
coast.

Into the Presence-Chamber of dim Death  
He hath been summoned! and I hold my  
post

Here on the threshold, thirsty for one breath  
Released from yonder! Leave me! I love  
my night,  
More than abounding pulses of your light!

### TINTADGEL

TINTADGEL, from thy precipice of rock  
Thou frownest back the vast Atlantic shock!  
Yet purple twilight in cathedral caves,  
Moulded to the similitude of waves  
Tempestuous by awful hands of storm,  
Along whose height the formidable form  
Of some tall phantom stands on guard; huge  
boulders

From iron crags reft, toys of ocean shoulders,  
And thine own venerable keep that yields  
To slow persuasion ancient Nature wields.

Inevitably sure, forebode thy fall:  
For she compels the individual  
To merge in the full manifold of Her  
His cherished privacy of character:  
And therefore Arthur's ancient ramparts  
range  
From human fellowship to nature, change  
To semblance of the fretted weathered stone,  
Upreared by mystic elements alone.

That old grey church upon the sheer black  
crag,  
Where generations under the worn flag,  
Or in God's acre sleep! There one dark  
morn

I worshipped—heights of heaven all forlorn  
With drift confused, wild wind, and the  
blown rain—

I mused of those who in the lonely fane  
Halted world-weary through the centuries;  
Kelt, Saxon, Norman, English; on their eyes  
The dust of Death; Oblivion holds the  
psalms,

Where now in turn we celebrate the calms,  
The Sabbath calms, with hymns and chanted  
prayer.

But what indignant wail of wild despair  
Storms at the doors and windows, shakes the  
walls?

Before the void unsouled sound that appals,  
Our human hymns in that dim sheltered place  
Seem to fall low, to cower, and hide the  
face.

Awhile faint praise wins victory; uproars  
On overshadowing vans without the doors  
Whirlwind insurgent, as in awful scorn,  
To be controlled no longer, nor forborne  
Of poor brief fluttering human hopes and  
breath,

Played with a moment by the winds of death.  
Ere dissolution and dismemberment  
In the undivine, dim void where all lie shent;  
A shivering foam-flake, or a timid light  
Spat upon by the rains, extinguished quite!  
We laugh in fair pavilions of light Love,  
Or worship in the solemn, sacred Grove,  
We rest in warm Affection built to last:  
And all will leave us naked to the blast!

What means the wind? Yon ruin's proud decay—

We know not who in far-off years did lay  
The strong foundations: Arthur, Guinevere,  
And Lancelot, were they indeed once here?  
Are all fair shadows of a poet's dream,  
Or did they ride in the early morning beam,  
Armed, and resplendent, radiant within,  
Champion redressors, quelling tyrant Sin,  
Slaying grim dragon Wrongs, who held in ward

The maiden Innocence; from Joyous-Guard,  
Camelot, or Tintadgel, brave and glad,  
Did they indeed ride, Lancelot, Galahad?  
Have lawless love, and Modred swept to ground

That glorious order of the Table Round?  
Who knows? they are but creatures of the brain;

Or if they were, behold our mightiest wane,  
With all their sounding praise, like dream-shadows,

Storm-rack that drifts, or billowy foam! none knows

Whether they were, or were not; sombre keep,  
And chapel crown twin crags, one ruin-heap,  
While the sea thunders under, and between,  
And cliffs no hand hewed mimic what hath been

In weathered buttress, pinnacle, and tower!  
Where now the prancing steed, the lady's bower?

No clang of arms, no battle bugle blown,  
Only in sounding cave the wild sea clarion!

But then my heart responded to the blast;  
I deem that in those clouds of the dim past  
Tall godlike forms loom verily; with us  
Dwell souls who are not less magnanimous.  
They pass, yet only to be self-fulfilled;  
They pass, yet only as the All hath willed,  
To enter on their full-earned heritage,  
More righteous, and momentous wars to wage;

And if those heroes were not, then the mind  
That holds high visions of our human kind  
Is mightier than mighty winds and waves,  
And lovelier than emerald floors of caves.

Nature Herself is the high utterance  
Of holy gods; we, half awake in trance,  
Hear it confused; through some half-open door

We hear an awful murmur, and no more:  
We are under some enchantment; lift the spell,

What mortal then the wondrous tale may tell?

TINTADGEL, 1884.

## SUSPIRIA <sup>24</sup>

LINES ADDRESSED TO H. F. B.

Do you remember the billowy roar of tumultuous ocean,

Darkling, emerald, eager under vaults of the cave,

Shattered to simmer of foam on a boulder of delicate lilac,

Disenchantless youth of the clear, immortal wave?

Labyrinths begemmed with fairy lives of the water,

Sea-sounding palace halls far statelier than a King's,

Seethe of illumined floor with a never-wearying motion,

Oozy enchased live-walls, where a sea-music rings?

Do you remember the battle our brown-winged arrowy vessel

Waged with wind and tide, a foaming billowy night,

To a sound as of minute guns, when gloomy hearts of the hollows

With sullen pride rebuffed invading Ocean's might?

Do you remember the Altarlet towers that front the cathedral,

Dark and scarred sheer crag, flashed o'er by the wild sea-mews?

How they wheel aloft lamenting, souls of the ululant tempest!

And the lightning billows clash in the welter Odin brews!

A sinister livid glare from under  
 brows of the Storm-Sun!  
 Brows of piled-up cloud, threatening grim  
 Brechou,  
 Bleaching to ghastly pale the turbulent trouble  
 of water,  
 While the ineffable burden of grey world  
 o'er me grew!  
 Yea, all the weary waste of cloud confused  
 with the ocean  
 Fell full-charged with Doom on a foundering  
 human heart:  
 Our souls were moved asunder, away to an  
 infinite distance,  
 While all the love that warmed me waned,  
 and will depart.  
 Fiends of the whirlwind howl for a wild  
 carousal of slaughter  
 Of all that is holy and fair, so shrills the  
 demon wail;  
 Ruin of love and youth, with all we have  
 deemed immortal!  
 My child lies dead in the dark, and I  
 begin to fail!  
 Wonderful visions wane, tall towers of  
 phantasy tumble;  
 I shrink from the frown without me, there  
 is no smile within;  
 I cower by the fireless hearth of an unin-  
 habited chamber,  
 Alone with Desolation, and the dumb  
 ghost of my sin.  
  
 I have conversed with the aged; once  
 their souls were a furnace;  
 Now they are gleams in mouldered vaults  
 of the memory:  
 All the long sound of the Human wanes to  
 wails of a shipwreck,  
 Drowned in the terrible roar of violent  
 sons of the sea!  
 In the immense storm-chaunt of winds and  
 waves of the sea!  
 And if we have won some way in our weary  
 toil to the summit,  
 Do we not slither ever back to the mouth  
 of the pit?

When I behold the random doom that en-  
 gulphs the creature,  
 I wonder, is the irony of God perchance in it?  
 'Tis a hideous spectacle to shake the sides of  
 fiends with laughter,  
 Where in the amphitheatre of our red  
 world they sit!  
 Yea, and the rosiest Love in a songful heart  
 of a lover,  
 Child of Affinity, Joy, Occasion, beautiful  
 May,  
 May sour to a wrinkled Hate, may wear and  
 wane to Indifference:  
 Ah! Love, an' thou be mortal, all will  
 soon go grey!  
 O when our all on earth is wrecked on reefs  
 of disaster,  
 May the loud Night that whelms be found  
 indeed God's Day!

Our aims but half our own, we are  
 drifted hither and thither;  
 The quarry so fiercely hunted rests un-  
 heeded now;  
 And if we seized our bauble, it is fallen to  
 ashes,  
 But a fresh illusion haunts the ever-aching  
 brow.  
 Is the world a welter of dream, with ne'er  
 an end, nor an issue,  
 Or doth One weave Dark Night, with  
 Morning's golden strand,  
 To a Harmony with sure hand?  
 Ah! for a vision of God! for a mighty grasp  
 of the real,  
 Feet firm based on granite in place of  
 crumbling sand!  
 O to be face to face, and heart to heart with  
 our dearest,  
 Lost in mortal mists of the unrevealing land!  
 Oh! were we disenthralled from casual moods  
 of the outward,  
 Slaves to the smile or frown of tyrant,  
 mutable Time!  
 Might we abide unmoved in central deeps  
 of the Spirit,  
 Where the mystic jewel Calm glows ever-  
 more sublime!

The dizzying shows of the world, that fall  
 and tumble to chaos,  
 Dwell irradiate there in everlasting prime.  
 But the innermost spirit of man, who is one  
 with the Universal,  
 Yearns to exhaust, to prove, the Immense  
 of Experience,  
 Explores, recedes, makes way, distils a food  
 from a poison,  
 From strife with Death wrings power, and  
 seasoned confidence.  
 O'er the awakening infant, drowsing eld, and  
 the mindless,  
 Their individual Spirit glows enthroned in  
 Heaven,  
 Albeit at dawn, or even, or from confusion  
 of cloudland,  
 Earth of their full radiance may remain  
 bereaven:  
 Yea, under God's grand eyes all souls lie  
 pure and shriven.

Nay! friend beloved! remember  
 purple robes of the cavern,  
 And all the wonderful dyes in dusky halls  
 of the sea,  
 When a lucid lapse of the water lent thrills  
 of exquisite pleasure,  
 A tangle of living lights all over us tenderly.  
 When our stilly bark lay floating, or we were  
 lippling the water,  
 Breast to breast with the glowing, ardent  
 heart of the deep!

That was a lovelier hour, whispering hope  
 to the spirit,  
 Breathing a halcyon calm, that lulled  
 despair to sleep;

Fairy flowers of the ocean, opening inner-  
 most wonder,  
 Kindle a rosy morn imperaled in the  
 waterways,  
 A myriad tiny diamond founts arise in the  
 coralline,  
 Anemones love to be laved in the life of  
 the chrysoprase;

The happy heart of the water in many un-  
 known recesses  
 Childly babbled, and freely to glad  
 companions:

We will be patient, friend, through all the  
 moods of the terror,  
 Waiting in solemn hope resurrection of  
 our suns!

Cherish loves that are left, pathetic  
 stars in the gloaming;  
 Howe'er they may wax and wane, they  
 are with us to the end;  
 The Past is all secure, the happy hours and  
 the mournful  
 Involved i' the very truth of God Him-  
 self, my friend!

It is well to wait in the darkness for the  
 Deliverer's moment,  
 With a hand in the hand of God, strong  
 Sire of the universe;

It is well to work our work, with cheering  
 tones for a brother,  
 Whose poor bowed soul, like ours, the  
 horrible gulfs immerse;

Then dare all gods to the battle! Who of  
 them all may shame us?  
 The very shows of the world have fleeting  
 form from thee:

Discover but thy task, embrace it firm with  
 a purpose;  
 Find, and hold by Love, for Love is  
 Eternity.

SARK, 1881.

O to be sure for ever! weary of hopes  
 and guesses,  
 I would the film might fall that veils our  
 orbs in night!

At eve grey phantom armies guard the  
 mighty mountain,  
 Denying free approach to wistful wonder-  
 ing sight,

A Presence dim divined through blind im-  
 palpable motion,  
 An awful formless Form, i' the core of  
 change unmoved—

No more was ours, until the grand invincible  
 Angel,  
 The clear-eyed North, blew bare Heaven's  
 azure heights, and proved

Hope's heavenliest flight weak-winged ; his  
breath with clangorous challenge

Dissolved the cloud-battalions, withering  
shamed away :

Behold, in sunrise dyed, a wondrous vision  
of high crag,

Spires of leaping flame arrested in mid-  
play ;

Peak, rock-tower, and dome ; huge peals of  
an ocean of thunder

Assumed a bodily form in yonder wild  
array !

And the long continuous roll of cloudy storm  
subsiding

Was tranced to awful slopes of smooth  
grey precipice,

While over all up-soared, retiring into the  
heavens,

Ever higher and higher, snows and gleam-  
ing ice !

Plain beyond plain, the strophes of a glorious  
poem,

Voyaging stately and calm to heights of  
the argument . . .

How to be sure for ever ? deepening all our  
being,

And emptying self of self, with Truth we  
shall be blent.

Yon hierarchy sublime of calm ethereal  
mountain

Was born of earth's fierce passion, world-  
confounding throes,

Fire, and battle, and gloom ; the livid demon  
of lightning

Flashed his zigzag blaze to be a norm for  
those ;

Birth and death, monotonous toil in deeps of  
the ocean,

Co-operant blind to fashion a far-off repose.

Whose brief earth-hour may taste ripe future  
fruit of the ages ?

Gauge with a life's one pace the march of  
the armies of God ?

Forestall results of time, flash all the sun from  
a dew-drop ?

But where the Sire hath willed, there every  
footstep trod.

'Tis only a little we know ; but ah !  
the Saviour knoweth ;

I will lay the head of a passionate child  
on His gentle breast,

I poured out with the wave, He founded  
firm with the mountain ;

In the calm of His infinite eyes I have  
sought and found my rest.

O to be still on the heart of the God we  
know in the Saviour,

Feeling Him more than all the noblest  
gifts He gave !

To be is more than to know ; we near the  
Holy of Holies

In coming home to Love ; we shall know  
beyond the grave.

Ah ! the peace of the beautiful realm,  
like dew, sinks into my spirit ;

True and tender friend, I love to be here  
with thee.

The pines, tall fragrant columns of a magni-  
ficent temple,

Are ranged before the ethereal mountain  
majesty :

While a dove-coloured lapse of the water  
merrily murmurs a confidence

Into a quiet ear of twilit beautiful  
bowers ;

Sweet breath of the pyrola woos us, white  
waxen elf of the woodland,

And two tired hearts may play awhile with  
the innocent flowers.

SAN MARTINO, 1882.

## AUTUMN

### I.—ALONE

LEAVES from lofty elms on high  
In pale air swim shadowy ;

Fall,

Till, level with a weathered wall,  
Glow their autumn colours all ;

Faintly rustle, touching earth ;  
 Where, in mimicry of mirth,  
 With a crisper rustle dance,  
 When the viewless winds advance,  
 Driven leaves, decayed and brown,  
 Eddying as they are blown.  
 Dear illusions perish so,  
 Summer nurslings, ere the snow ;  
 Loosen from a fading youth,  
 Leave us barren to the truth.  
 Nay, they blossom forth again !  
 Spring from winter, joy from pain,  
 Again !

How yon leaflet floats, returning  
 To the tree where leaves are burning !  
 Or is it a small dark bird  
 Nestling in the boughs unheard ?  
 Lo ! a latticed height of planes,  
 Green athwart blue skyey lanes,  
 Blue laving continents of cloud,  
 Violet vapour thunder-browed :  
 Yellowing foliage is fair,  
 Gold-green as an evening air,  
 Thronged upon a deep dove-grey ;  
 Higher up the halls of day,  
 Light darkens, yet doth not consume  
 Boughs waving in a fiery tomb,  
 In a gash of brazen fire,  
 Early sunset's ruddy pyre.

## II.—LOVERS ON THE RIVER

Floating on a slender river,  
 A pale violet flame,  
 Windless air, a violet flame,  
 Clear reflections only quiver,  
 Flickering with margin blurred !  
 Whisper, bird,  
 A word !  
 Through a mossy arch impearled,  
 Rounded in the water-world,  
 Love ! behold a little boat  
 With a white sail, stilly float  
 Far off, even  
 In Heaven ;  
 For the river-reach appears  
 To mount a violet air ;

A spirit's wings in violet air,  
 Free from human woes and fears,  
 In our dreams  
 It seems !  
 While yon kine upon the marge,  
 On the meadowy marge,  
 Greenly-glowing pasture large,  
 Send their gleam of coloured shadow  
 Beyond a green bank from the meadow,  
 Where rushes are,  
 Afar !  
 Perished all sweet summer posies ;  
 Yet a radiant air  
 Lavishes more fair  
 Roseflush from windwoven roses  
 Rich and rare.  
 Now we float in orchard closes,  
 Darkly, magically green,  
 Ne'er an apple seen :  
 Till the water winds between  
 Beechen hills,  
 And leaf-fed rills,  
 Whose rich furnace chestnut-gold  
 Dowers the wave with wealth untold ;  
 Flakes of burning gold  
 Lying on the vivid grass  
 Gorgeous, while we softly pass.  
 Lo ! slim aspens yellow-pale,  
 Inlaying far mist while we sail :  
 Whisper, bird,  
 A word !  
 Whisper, murmur, never move  
 From thy pillow, love !  
 From my bosom, tender dove !  
 Lying quiet, hand in hand,  
 We will dream we need not land  
 Upon the shore,  
 Where evermore  
 Love, a rainbow, dear illusion,  
 Melts into the world's confusion !  
 We will dream no chance may sever  
 Two fond hearts upon the river  
 Of their own felicity !  
 We will dream Love need not die ;  
 Only fly,  
 In the even,  
 To Heaven !

## III.—IN THE GLENS

Upon the huge rock-rooted elm we stood,  
That hangs and murmurs o'er a shadowy  
deep,

Where a dim glen lies silently in sleep.  
There one tall ash, crowned queen of all the  
wood,

Rises above a labyrinthine brood,  
Verdurous underglooms, adown the steep  
Riverward falling : nightdews well and weep  
In their rich bowers of odorous solitude.  
Boulders block leafy cataracts, that brave  
With rebel surge the crag's commanding wall :  
Beeches burn brilliant against a grave  
Mist-sombred russet foliage, that all  
Seems, like a surf, to mount the steep, nor  
fall ;

Climbs the high cliffs, a never-refluent wave.

We swung beneath the rugged antlered form ;  
Clambering, plunged into a green profound,  
Ash-pale rent vapours gathering around  
Those vast elm-arms upwriten to the storm ;  
Till we beheld a cliff's grey bulk enorm.  
Crimson beyond the woodland where we  
wound,

Whose boughs half veiled the grandeur  
sunset-warm ;

High cliff that doth the tidal Avon bound.

Here, where steep rocks are riven abrupt and  
gory,

Where leans, weird thyrus, a thin branchless  
tree,

Ivied, discrowned, athwart their promontory,  
Midmost all rank and fleshy growths that be,  
Nightshade, worn tumbled stones, and trunks  
mist-hoary,

Satyrs and fauns may hold strange revelry !

Then we emerged upon a slumbering tide,  
Where sounding fire-ships to the populous  
port

Draw vessels laden ; there white birds resort,  
Whom light discovers, or hill-shadows hide,  
While slowly in aerial maze they glide.

Gorgeous Autumn holds her stately court,

A solemn queen, like Tragedy ; gold-wrought,  
Her train fills all the glens ; she is Death's  
bride ;

For soon she shall be robed in a white shroud.  
But we, fond friends, we dared to breathe  
aloud

Vows of a love undying ; though a cloud  
Gathered, passed over, melted in the blue ;  
Though withering worlds, like leaves, around  
us flew ;

And all the abysses yawned upon us two.

All awful Forces of the Universe,  
Within, beneath, around us and above,  
Dark armoured Phantoms, frowned upon our  
love,

Breathing cold scorn thereover, for a curse.  
Behold ! how blind wild hurricanes disperse  
A foam-flake, inland blown from a sea-cove ;  
So man's fair hopes inviolable prove.

Cling, hearts, a moment ere the gulfs im-  
merse !

For Self, and Sin, with all that sundereth,  
Mad Chance, and Change, faint Absence, and  
dim Death,

A ghostly army, leagued against Love's breath,  
Have sworn to annihilate ; life's shadows  
close :

But Love, whose blossom fleeteth as it blows,  
Rests in the heart of a Divine repose.

## MONTE ROSA

ROSA ! thy battlement of beaming ice  
Burns, like the battlement of Paradise :  
One block of long white light unsulliable  
Glow in deep azure, Heaven's cathedral wall,  
Gleams, a pure loveliness of angel thought,  
With Heaven's inviolable ardour fraught.  
A myriad flowers play fearless at thy feet,  
And many a flying fairy sips their sweet,  
While with the Sun of souls, the Paraclete,  
Thou communest up yonder, rapt from earth,  
Robed in the evening-gold, or morning-mirth.  
One cloudy surge from thy tremendous steep  
Recoils, and hangs a warder o'er thy sleep,

Whose awful spirit in deep reverie  
Above the world abides eternally :  
While seraphs roam around thy silver slope,  
Nestle in thy hollows, and with fair-flying  
hope

Temper the intolerable severity  
Of holiest Purpose ; many a floweret blows  
In the unearthly Honour of thy snows,  
Like innocent loves in souls erect, sublime,  
Who breathe above the tainted air of time :  
While many a falling water kisses  
Tinkling emerald abysses  
Of shadowy cavern with cool rain,  
Clear gliding rills in polished porcelain  
Channels descending o'er a crystal plain  
From the Frost-Spirit's palace bowers  
Of sea-green pinnacles and toppling towers,  
And grim white bastion defiled  
With rocky ruin of the wild :  
While over all thy luminous pure ice  
Rears the stupendous radiant precipice,  
High terraces the seraphim have trod,  
Stairs dwindling fainter, as they near the  
abode,  
Where in light unimaginable dwells God.

But now around thee sullen, murmuring  
Storm

Flings his dark mantle ; such around the form  
Of awful Samuel, summoned from the tomb,  
At Endor rose : then all is rayless gloom  
About thy Presence for a little while ;  
Until God draws in His cathedral aisle  
The folding shroud from thy dread counte-  
nance.

Behold ! above the storm, as in a trance,  
Thy grand, pale Face abides, regarding us,  
As from Death's realm afar, like risen Lazarus !

Isled in dusk blue, one star thrills faintly  
shining

Over thy crest in mournful day's declining :  
Far away glens deep solitary blanch  
With snow fresh fallen of the avalanche ;  
Forested prowls the haggard wolf, the craven,  
While o'er me croaking weirdly wheels the  
raven ;

Yonder in twilight, fretted with fierce fire,  
Lower vast vans of hungering lammergeyer !

Dark vassal crags, who guard thine awful  
throne,

Wearing dim forests for a sounding zone,  
Divide to let thy torrent coursers flee  
With thunderous embassy to the great Sea.

Behold ! on grand long summits bowed  
A huge ghost-cataract of cloud !  
Niagara motionless, unvoiced,  
In dim rapt air portentous poised !  
But ruffled plumes of Tempest lower  
Where the giant cliffs uptower,  
While their impregnable fort frowns  
Defiant, and their haughty crowns,  
Their vapoury veils,  
Livid ice-ribs, and wolf-fanged teeth  
Threaten implacable with death  
Rash mortal who assails !  
Beneath them the heart fails.  
One rayless wilderness of stone  
Upreared, they warn from their bleak throne ;  
Ruined halls of lonely storms,  
Whose are weird dishevelled forms,  
Dark as eerie crags that loom,  
Brooding haggard in the gloom,  
Assuming semblance of rent thunder,  
While they wait expectant under.

Lo ! one wide ocean of tumultuous sound  
Terrific bursts ! flooding Heaven's profound,  
Shatters the concave ! hark ! how, one by  
one,

Each monarch mountain on his far white  
throne,

Shocked, buffeted by that infernal word,  
His own portentous utterance hath roared,  
Tearing night, startled with flame-sweep of  
sword,

And bellowing fierce frantic wrath  
Into the steam of that hell-broth  
Around : white fires flash swift unfurled  
Over dim ruin of a watery world !  
Hark ! huge war-standards ponderous un-  
rolling

Over wild surges of tempestuous blast !  
While storm-stifled bells are tolling  
For souls of pilgrims who have passed  
Home at last !

But here amid earthquaking shocks,  
Whirlwinds rave around the rocks :  
Great pines, agonising horrent  
O'er the white terror of the torrent,  
In wild lightning-fits leap out  
From death's womb, a ghastly rout,  
And all wild demon-chariots roll,  
Hurling, chaotic, blind, reft from control ;  
Until the elemental rage subsides ;  
Ebbs the fell fury of ethereal tides ;  
Atlantic billows of slow sullen sound  
Subsiding wander o'er the immeasurable  
Profound.

. . . Rosa! the Moon soothes thine un-  
earthly rest,  
And Peace pervades the snows upon thy  
breast!

VAL ANZASCA.

#### TO ERIC FROM THE ALPS

THE fragrant pines are green, love,  
The pines are fair and tall,  
Dear is the Alpine scene, love,  
Peak, flower, and waterfall ;  
But my heart's tendrils favour  
Humbler pines at home,  
For there the weak feet waver,  
That never learned to roam.  
One day about the wood, dear,  
Thy steps began to go,  
And all my stony mood, dear,  
Was moved to happy flow ;  
But when they ceased from pleasure  
Upon the woodland floor,  
Silence in deeper measure  
Than e'er was known before  
Returned for evermore, dear,  
Returned for evermore.

#### IN THE DOLOMITES

ONE haughty, precipitous peak, enveloped,  
embraced in a white cloud,  
Hath freed himself from the clasp, and  
flung the cloud into space ;

A woman, I deem, once loved ! now all un-  
crowned and degraded,  
She lies a white heap dishvelled, not too  
far from his face.  
Later I looked, and lo ! at his iron feet she  
hath grovelled,  
The cloud-bride cannot believe she is  
thrown for ever away !  
Hath she not lain in his bosom ? all for the  
fault of a moment !  
The stern crag heeds her not, relentless  
facing the day.

MELCHA<sup>35</sup> \*

#### I

MANY have longed for a maiden fair,  
Who still is free as summer air :  
Longing youths are strong and bright ;  
She is free as summer light,  
"Melcha, Melcha," parents say,  
"Time flies, my child ! no more delay !  
Young Geraldine would lead thee home ;  
Worthier wooer will not come."  
Half her young heart may playful lean  
To the love of the love of Geraldine ;  
But little she cares for rout or ball,  
With flushing face and soft footfall ;  
She plies her needle, churns her cream,  
Milks a heifer of snowy gleam,  
And more than all the pensive child  
Loves to wander alone and wild,  
With her own kindred bee or bird,  
Far from all the human herd,  
Over heather, over hill,  
By the torrent, by the still  
Lake-margin, in a noonday trance,  
Brooding over old romance.

Melcha favours with her love  
Every flowery nook and cove ;  
Floats upon the placid stream,  
Silvern as a silver bream,  
Flying from a common life  
All too full of soil and strife ;

\* See note H.

Till once her shallop drifted to a cave,  
 That looks upon Lough Lean's cool whisper-  
   ing wave,  
 Where silent water-light for loving eyes  
 Weaves mazy melodies  
 Over pellucid filmy fern,  
 Whose is many a fairy urn,  
 Festooning fair the rocky cavern-wall,  
 And glowing in a trickling waterfall,  
 Among sweet closely-woven mosses,  
 Where a rainbow globelet crosses  
 Ever to supply the losses,  
 Growing from long ferny nerves,  
 Like a meteor,  
 Startling merrily upon a flowery floor  
 A blue-eyed blossom, till it thrills and  
   swerves!

Ruddied with the fiery globe,  
 Autumn's gorgeous golden robe  
 Involves majestic mountain forms,  
 Cragg familiar with storms,  
 Grandly towering aglow,  
 Burning tranquil waves below,  
 Purpled here with miles of heather,  
 Shadowed often altogether.  
 Yonder shines the Eagle's Nest  
 In a glorious verdure-vest:  
 She hath climbed his rocky crest;  
 Seen the stately eagle hover,  
 Imperial-poised, a thunder-cloud above her,  
 Whom a pearly sunbeam found  
 Luminous-brown, with all around  
 Opal air, and o'er the glens  
 Under, and o'er all the fens.

If eagles are monarchs of air,  
 Red deer are lords of the glen!  
 Behold! a stag over there,  
   Defiant of hounds and men,  
 In a lair of tall Osmunda,  
 Antlered, large-eyed, a wonder.

She looked upon the luminous lake,  
 Seeing tufts of bilberry shake  
 In a wandering breeze  
 O'er their images;  
 Red-boled luxuriant arbut trees,

With white flower and crimson fruit,  
 Glossy-leaved lave their root,  
 Darkening all the glass;  
 Saw the languid lake-lives waver  
 Below in a luminous water-quaver,  
 Where shadowy fishes pass;  
 Heard the lapping wavelets kiss,  
 While she dreamed of that or this—  
 Dreamed of old romance,  
 While light elf-like droppings dance,  
 Twinkling play  
 In a fairy spray.  
 "I would fly the vulgar toil;  
 I would fly the strife and soil;  
 I would slumber, and awake  
 In the bosom of the lake!"  
 She is lulled to sweet repose  
 By a far-off mellow chime,  
 By the water's murmured rhyme,  
 By the wild bee in the thyme,  
 Till her eyelids close.

Hark! a long sweet note resounding,  
 From the mountain clear rebounding!  
 Hills are all alive with voices,  
 With soft spirit noises.  
 Naiads of the shadowy water,  
 Every gentle woodland daughter,  
 All ye lovely fays who are  
 In the valleys of Glenâa!  
 All who haunt the Purple Mountain,  
 Souls of many a far-off fountain,  
 All in air, or underground,  
 Or in hollow cliff spellbound,  
 Breathe your delicate spirit-voices!  
 Eagle's Nest is all alive,  
 As though he were a fairies' hive;  
 Musically ruffled he rejoices;  
 Hurrying notes in sweet confusion,  
 Marrying with soft collusion;  
 Awful, solemn-toned, and loud;  
 Low as from beneath a shroud;  
 Pausing now for a reply  
 From far crags and cliffs that lie  
 Underneath another sky!  
 Now they fall to slumber, murmuring unquietly.  
 High Carantuohil is the last to hear,  
 Murmuring from his cloud, and solitary sphere.

What is the mild mystic trouble,  
Where in the lake  
Sun floats, a flashing double?  
Maiden, awake!  
One emerges from the flood,  
A snowy steed and rider, with pure radiance  
imbued!

He doth not seem of mortal mould,  
Whose lineaments, how grave and pale!  
Beam from a raised visor of gold,  
Whose silver dripping mail,  
And lofty plume him tall reveal  
More than all sons of mortals; his white  
steed

Stately paces the blue mead.  
Slowly toward fair Melcha's nook  
His majestic course he took:  
Delighted wonder made her start;  
Fearless flutters her young heart.  
"So my long-fondled tales are true:  
Here is Lord O'Donoghue!"

He, swift leaping from his horse,  
Seized her hand with gentle force:  
She, gazing in the awful eyes,  
Found them full of loving light;  
Lovely seemed to her the knight;  
Then she veiled her maiden eyes;  
And her tender heart was taken,  
Taken ere she was aware,  
By the spirit tall and white,  
Ere he spake, "O maiden fair!"  
Spake with accent soft and rare,  
"Wilt thou wed the waters blue?  
Wilt thou love O'Donoghue?  
Wilt thou love me, maiden mild?  
Fair my dwelling, gentle child!  
Under the blue water!

Yet, 'tis weird, and vast, and cold;  
I desire a mortal daughter  
To enfold!  
But I know not if the wave  
Unto thee would prove a grave: . . .  
. . . All those wonders shall be thine,  
If thou wilt be mine!"  
"Thine!"

So the little Melcha breathed;  
And the spirit's arms enwreathed  
Her a moment, as he won her:

"Darling, meet me when May morn-  
ing,  
Earth with bridal wreaths adorning,  
Opens earliest eyes upon her!  
Wait me on the tufted rock:  
Well thou knowest I will not mock . . .  
. . . From your white bosom give me yon  
silk scarf like flame!"  
He stole it, she allowing, and he vanished  
as he came.

O! how poor is our dull earth,  
Till the happy morn have birth.  
And Melcha's father's bitter wife  
Doth not sweeten Melcha's life!  
With such unearthly eyes she moved, it roused  
a dark derision;  
She stumbled o'er her daily tasks i' the  
glamour of her vision.  
She moved as one who is amazed,  
With a sudden splendour dazed:  
"Dare I with a spirit go  
To the crystal realms below?  
And will he keep faith with me,  
Far lowlier than he?  
I deem he was a monarch mild;  
And yet a Paynim, I a Christian child!  
May I wed a fairy undefiled?  
But he is glorious and true!  
I told the priest of our sweet interview.  
Under close confession-seal:  
He deemed it some hallucination;  
'Our Lady hover over thee, and heal!  
Flee very verges of damnation!  
I know thou dost prefer thy nook  
By yonder lake to holy book,  
Or holy ordinance; be wary!  
Dally not with Paynim fairy!'?  
Nay, my love's a holy feast!  
He but dotes, our aged priest:  
And since I know he must be good,  
I will tell him of the rood!  
What a noble conquest this!  
He shall taste eternal bliss,  
By his love for little me;  
And, for reward, what wonders he  
Will reveal to my glad mind,  
By the many undivined!

Yet do I sleep, or do I wake?  
 Shall I live beneath the lake? . . .  
 He told me 'twas like Heaven there . . .  
 With him I will fly anywhere!"

But Melcha had a younger sister,  
 Whom she cherished; and she kissed her  
 With strange tenderness that night  
 Of April, ere the eventful light.  
 Misting tears are in her eyes,  
 Looking on her ere she flies;  
 Looking in toward the bed,  
 Where a fair and dreamless head  
 Slumbers on without a sorrow,  
 Blithe to-day, and blithe to-morrow.  
 Little Melcha cannot sleep.  
 Shall she laugh, or shall she weep?  
 She must leave her virgin chamber,  
 Where she taught a rose to clamber;  
 She must leave her little bird,  
 Who in a sweet May dawn is stirred,  
 And the snowy folds of fume,  
 That curtain frail her beamy room,  
 Yea, and leave the mother's grave,  
 Her young grief was wont to lave.

Ere the sun she flies away:  
 Is it not the first of May?  
 But she hath a favourite fawn  
 Silver-clear as a May dawn;  
 Tho' he must leave her at the lake,  
 Till the last he'll not forsake!  
 Still a silver twinkling star  
 Laughs over woodlands of Glenâa;  
 Yet the merry bird hath warbled,  
 O'er his five eggs wine-immarbled,  
 Notes that fall a rich perfume  
 Over orchards in white bloom;  
 These festoon a violet air,  
 As she looks among the boughs,  
 In her bridal gossamer,  
 Where no costly jewel glows,  
 Save some dew that fall on her  
 From young foliage and fir.  
 Now a rosy gleam hath tinged  
 Waters fair, and forest-fringed;  
 Far away tall Carantuohil  
 Glows in Heaven, a lonely jewel!

There a moment let her falter,  
 There before the woodland altar,  
 Where a lamp for ever burns  
 In a chapel among the ferns,  
 Asking of the carven Christ:  
 "Do I well to keep the tryst?"

She is at the tufted rock,  
 Hearing gentle water shock  
 Clear beneath her; a careering hawk  
 Hangs o'er abrupt dark-wooded heights of  
 Torc!  
 At whose rich feet tall ash, hawthorn, and  
 holly,  
 Hang shadowy bowers over waters melan-  
 choly.  
 Dinis isle, and many an isle,  
 Fair await the morning smile;  
 Between the hills a purple light fills heavenly  
 chalices;  
 Till lo! the Sun Himself enthroned in moun-  
 tain palaces!

And when He touched the flashing flood,  
 Music welled from wave and wood;  
 A celestial harmony  
 Floated over earth and sky. . . .  
 While from burning waves of blue  
 Burst the spirit O'Donoghue!  
 Beautiful youths and maidens, lovely water-  
 powers,  
 All enwreathed with heavenly flowers,  
 Like airy fancies from a poet's bowers,  
 Undulating o'er the gay  
 Crystal glory, many a fay,  
 Follow the war-horse as he prances,  
 Foam dancing all around him as he dances!  
 She beholds her crimson scarf  
 In the beams of morning laugh,  
 Bound about her stately charmer,  
 Bound about his radiant armour—  
 Now they are near the trysting-place;  
 Melcha's heart is like a leaf;  
 But when her lover looks into her face,  
 Those glorious amorous eyes are her relief.  
 He opens wide his arms to take her!  
 She will dare the fatal leap!  
 From his alluring nought shall shake her. . . .

She hath plunged into the deep! . . .  
 And the fairy fawn must weep.  
 Held to his heart she dares the dive ;  
 Explores a waterworld alive !  
 Only a vapour seems to glide,  
 Where O'Donoghue won his bride !

## II

How shall a mortal dare to tell  
 What there the little maid befell?  
 Nought she knows within the grasp,  
 Save that it is her lover's clasp. . . .  
 Released, she finds herself in wondrous  
     columned halls,  
 Whose grand infinitude her slender soul  
     appals.

Many a water-green, self-luminous column  
 Stupendous rises in dim heights and solemn.  
 Their labyrinths for evermore extend  
 In hollow-echoing chambers with no end.  
 Self-luminous are they, and yet very dim :  
 She turns, and hides her timid face in him.  
 "Is it not splendid, love, my water-dwelling?  
 With spherulic music all around thee welling?  
 My rainbow pillars, glowing with soft light,  
 Soaring till lost in Heaven's infinite?"  
 "Alas!" she said, "I hear low sounds un-  
     linked;

Nor seem your columns with blithe colours  
     tinct,  
 For all is sombre-hued, though beautiful.  
 Alas ! my hearing and mine eyes are dull!"

"Nay, come, for thou art dazzled!" he  
     replied,

In gentle tones of love to his young bride ;  
 Then bore her over the dim-shining floor  
 To where climbed, like a giant conqueror,  
 One of the columns, faintly tinged with rose.  
 "Melcha ! behold ! how glorious it glows !  
 Here, with the rose-hue, hues of the young  
     apple,  
 And of young pear leaves, blend, as by the  
     chapel  
 Near your sweet home, my love ; and violet,  
 With many other flower souls, have met.  
 Soft interchanging delicate qualities,  
 Alliance and imminglement of dyes.

They ever move with music from beneath,  
 Flower souls to bloom in many a fragrant  
     wreath

Up yonder, in yon visible world of light ;  
 But here in mine they are married ere the  
     flight.

Ever the Life from caverned gloom swift  
     flushes,

Mantling, as though through stalks of water-  
     rushes.

Here through these columns in your world  
     to blossom,

Innumerable fair from Night's own bosom.

Now these have changed to a wave of  
     breezy ocean,

Now to a river of full mazy motion ;

Here clouds arise, their hearts relieved in rain ;

Here two young forms, ere beauty's blossom  
     wane,

Clasp one another in pure loveliness ;

Here treachery murders, feigning a caress :

All genders a confused, life-labouring sound,

As Vulcan wrought in stithys underground.

Here element to element fond hies,

Or with a hatred of repulsion flies.

Each following his own affinities.

The rhythmic molecule, that only moves,

Foreknows blithe genius, who sings and  
     loves ;

Crystal snowflower, albumen ocean-floor,

Are faint foreshadowing of cells, and more,

Hold in their womb alcyon, moss, or rose :

Yea, rosier virgins lovelier than those !

There yawns no blank unfathomable abyss

Between the man, the sunbeam, and the  
     prism !

Heaving impartial, Night engendereth

Genius crowned, and Love with rosy wreath ;

Madness all haggard ; bloody Hate ; pale

Death ;

Or Sun, and Moon, and Stars, whose sem-  
     blance dim

With man, and beast, and bird of shadowy  
     limb,

Follow in bewildering swift change ;

All into one another find free range ;

Yet, save the flower-souls, they all appear

As in their embryo, phantasmal here."

But Melcha very faintly may discern  
Those ardours, even where they brightly burn,  
Needing some sweet assistance of his eyes :  
So to another column-stalk he flies.  
Here he revealed the bowels of old Earth ;  
Fire, and slow water-growths, and many a  
birth

Forgotten, long bereft of grief or mirth.  
There, in a third, intolerably royal,  
A soul of Sunlight bursteth, while the loyal  
Planets obeisant with their moons are moving ;  
Systems through solitary spaces roving  
In primal order, while young nebulae  
Blindly brood over worlds of grief and  
glee.

While these are clearest glories, yet there  
follow

All most prevailing in a sister hollow.  
There follow faintly other forms and colours,  
Herbs, and live things with many joys and  
dolours.

For every magic column hath a class  
Of powers prevailing in his mystic glass :  
This towering droops with wealth of many a  
world,

Like some vast palm, whose boughs are  
night-impearled,  
Or richly laden with dates' golden clusters ;  
So fountainous in ether float the starry lustres ;  
Even as a Geyser, or a fountain shoots  
In one straight water from perennial roots ;  
Falls in blue air with myriad diamonds fair  
hurled.

In yet another pillar he discovers  
Swarming low lives ; the animal world ; with  
lovers ;

Shadowy presentment of fair youths and  
maidens,

Lovingly marrying in fresh flowering aidenns ;  
With little babes, who laughing reach soft  
arms

To where above them mother's eyelight  
warms ;

All roseate dissolving ; pale wild-eyed  
Faces of saint, or seeker ; there harsh Pride,  
Horror, and Shame ; there Lust, and Cruelty  
Deformed arise in mists of lurid dye.

Here springs the growth supreme of Good  
and Evil,

Twin-birth indissoluble : angel, devil,  
Eternal hierarchies infinite,  
Animal, human ; sorrow and delight  
Issue in morning-gold, or sanguine gloom,  
From one divine unfathomable Womb ;  
Neither, and both, and more than both ; the  
Whole,

Adored in silence of the fainting soul.  
Hearken ! a sound of restless-hearted ocean ;  
Or of a city's far-off heard emotion !

But little Melcha shrinking hides in him.  
"I faint !" she cries, "for though mine eyes  
be dim,  
I cannot bear these awful sights and sounds,  
Where all immingling my poor sense con-  
founds."

"Nay, here," he chaunted, her own demon  
lover,  
While in his arms more loosely he enwove  
her,

"Here in solemn halls of Thought,  
The marvel of the world is ever wrought !  
Famine, a vulture, glares on men to ruin  
brought ;

Here loud volcanoes whelm with fiery lava ;  
Sin desolates a groaning earth with blood ;  
Here men and women loll by mango and  
lush guava ;

Fair Bacchanals are reeling near a winy wave  
or wood ;

Yea ! and the Man Divine dies for alien  
good."

"Ah !" she exclaimeth, "where is then  
the Rood ?

I lose my Lord in your sublime turmoil !  
Not so I learned Him on my native soil."

"Yet is He here in heavenlier raiment  
dressed ;

More nobly than in your old forms expressed !  
But now behold ! for thou must needs admire  
Monuments wrought as though from living  
fire !

Among these columns rising into real  
Stand fair enchantments of Thought's own  
ideal :

And lo! among them, wandering pale-  
browed,

Mighty creators, with raised eyes or bowed,  
Silently brooding, clothed in solemn cloud!

Here at a Plato's, or a Newton's gaze,  
To luminous order from a nebulous haze  
Gleams many a column: here Spinoza  
wanders ;

Schelling, the Stagyrte, or Hegel, ponders ;  
Kepler, or Galileo, crowned with stars ;

All Hero-shatterers of prison bars ;  
Columbus, and our earth-discoverers :  
Eagle-eyed martyrs of the quest for truth,  
Whose effort bloometh in immortal youth :  
Men dowered with the world's rank insult  
and hot hate,

Because they dared to smite our swollen state,  
Whose idol-wheels a human blood must  
lubricate !

Tyndale, Mazzini, Regulus, or Tell ;  
And they who by the Malian water fell!  
Cato, and Manlius ; patriots who died ;  
Harmodius, and all who brave a tyrant's  
purple pride !

Gems in the crown of Freedom set ;  
Washington, or Lafayette !

Here walks the wisest of Athenian teachers,  
And here the mightiest of Hebrew preachers ;  
Founders of all the commonwealths of earth ;  
Founders from whom world-shadowing faiths  
have birth.

Moses, Mohammed, with the Indian :  
Beethoven, Angelo, or Titian . . .  
Whose spirit stalks alone? the world-worn  
man,

Florentine Dante! he the third grand ghost,  
Who seems to rise above the glorious host  
Of Dædal poets—third—there are two others ;  
Homer, with Avon's bard ; and yet some  
brothers

Have scarce a lowlier post, from Orient  
And Western climes ; they form of sound, or  
stone,

Or metal, colour, word, a monument,  
Wherein their own essential selves have grown.

Perishing sea-lives leave the coral-forest  
Fair from their hearts ; like these on whom  
thou porest ;

And glory of the rainbow-rippled shells  
Flows from a lowly life that ever wells.  
Luxuriant labyrinths of sound are floated  
From choirs of viewless harmonists full-  
throated !

Rearers of Temples, and Cathedrals grand,  
Whom earth remembers not, imperial band,  
Behold ! with Pheidias, and Praxiteles ;  
And many who left no memory with these."  
But when the Knight beheld some members  
of the throng,  
Impetuously he burst forth into song :

" Builders of the warning tower,  
Whose flashing eye commands the storm,  
When thunderous wild waves fling foaming  
arms of power,  
To hurl below, to shatter, the tall Saviour  
form !

Fathers of fire-souled mechanic  
Demons whirlwind-limbed are ye ;  
Of wrought-iron tubes Titanic  
Thrown 'thwart rivers, and the free  
Heretofore unfettered sea !

" Armoured monsters on the deep,  
Grim whale-like islands, formidably sleep :  
Your resolute fire-ships throbbing sweep !  
I' the teeth of howling solid blasts,  
And billowy cataracts hoar ocean casts  
To overwhelm, ye find the Pole,  
Guard a world-wide empire whole ;  
Quell the foes of freedom with indomitable  
soul !

" Sensitive needle in a crystal shrine,  
Who dost, like Conscience, evermore incline  
Toward one Eternal Pole, although the cloud  
From storm-tossed mariner Iliis radiance  
shroud !

By thee Gama dares to round  
Afric's awful utmost bound !  
And the Genoese discovers  
A morning-land for Liberty's blithe lovers !

"Your magic glass reveals a realm  
 Too far, too fine, for human eyes!  
 While suns, and planets, and fair moons o'er-  
   whelm,  
 In fairy-like societies,  
 Under our feet, in our own frames,  
 One organising Reason flames!  
 Man shrinks abashed within his shell,  
 Abashed by atom, world, and cell;  
 Yet magnifies the mighty Mind,  
 Subtler than light, more swift than wind,  
 That tangles in Her ordered prisms  
 Rays of unvoyageable abysms,  
 Pulsing a million years through strange  
   illimitable places,  
 Hurled from hot hearts of stars, far homes of  
   unimaginable races!

"Iron-souled Inventors, you  
 Are of earth's illustrious few!  
 Conquerors of reluctant Nature,  
 Adding to man's pigmy stature;  
 With delver's lamp, and axe, and power-  
   loom,  
 Your spirit broods upon the gloom;  
 Ye have arisen  
 To irradiate the serfs' dull prison!  
 Ye are they who forge the chain,  
 Flashing thought from brain to brain,  
 Not to bind,  
 But liberate mankind!  
 Ye have winged the fiery dragon,  
 Thundering to feast or drouth,  
 Ye who pass life's foaming flagon  
 Tumultuously from mouth to mouth,  
 Rushing North and rushing South!  
 Who devastate with rumbling tumbril-wheel,  
 Rifle, cannon, shell, or steel,  
 Human frames, and human hearts;  
 While our wharves, and all our marts  
 Glow wealthier from your arts:  
 With hideous scurf, with lurid smoke un-  
   blest,  
 Ye devastate earth's flowery rest.  
 Her virginal sweet vest!  
 Life's a journey;  
 Life's a tourney;  
 Swift we go!

Hail! wild wind of our strong speed,  
 Lightning, and a clangorous thunder!  
 Farm or village, town or mead,  
 Flashing past, earth trembles under;  
 Autumn leaves about us twirling,  
 Tumultuous clouds around us whirling,  
 Ringing axles eager to burst forth in flame!  
 Who shall tame us?  
 Praise or blame us!  
 Shrieking onward,  
 Hurrying sunward,  
 Swift we go,  
 Reeling, jarring, or with crash of horrible  
   overthrow,  
 Darkly travelling, ever nearing yonder  
   Orient aglow!"

Some ghosts, in gazing on a crystal tower,  
 Where man, or animal, or herb, or flower  
 More dominates, or sea, or earth, or sun,  
 Convert the several Powers they gaze upon  
 To gods of aspect glorious and strange,  
 Bewraying each his nature in the change;  
 Benign now; now malevolent they range.

And Melcha saw some spirits wandering  
   there,  
 Whose bodies yet abode i' the upper air.  
 Her lover, he who disappeared from earth  
 By other portals than Death's mystic birth  
 Into an alien land, so silent seeming;  
 As stars seem silent, or dim forests teeming  
 With infinite fairy-like societies,  
 Whose rich life-dramas we may faint surmise;  
 Her lover, he may view the spirits moving,  
 And she by him; but earthly souls, in roving  
 Through the stupendous halls that never end,  
 Perceive not those who died, although they  
   wend  
 Their ways beside them, nor some beings  
   nigh  
 Of another order in the hierarchy.  
 It may be few perceive them; yet all here  
 Assemble, each from his own natal sphere.  
 Only a dweller in a foreign star  
 Hath his more wonted haunts from these  
   afar,  
 In other realms of Nature's laboratory.

Nor of the dead may all distinguish well  
 Their dead companions ; for souls from hell,  
 And souls from heaven mutually repel.  
 But all seems peopled with impalpable pale  
 hosts,

A human crowd, and even with less than  
 human ghosts.

No word is breathed between the shapes  
 who wander :

On one another's work they reverently ponder;  
 Knowing the Lord all over it and under.

The wisest ask no homage for their names,  
 To One all-bounteous yielding private claims.  
 And where some organising thought, long  
 gleaming

Upon a column's core, hath left it beaming,  
 For ever after, when a follower gazes,  
 Reason's high hallowing remains, and blazes  
 I' the core of these enchanted chrysopeas.

The lovers first behold a Dædal thought,  
 With the world's buoyant youth sublimely  
 fraught.

Here, as in purest marble white,  
 Though with a sunrise faintly flushing,  
 Are nobly-moulded forms who fight,  
 Chariots and steeds to battle rushing.  
 Here glorious Achilles mourns his friend,  
 Embracing a young warrior's corse,  
 While, with head bowed to earth, each  
 generous horse

Of race divine who brought him mourns  
 Patroclus' end.

There Hector flies the avenging Champion,  
 Roused from his sullen rest upon the plain ;  
 Thrice round Troy-ramparts, by Achilles  
 slain,

Lashed to his car, before proud Iliion,  
 Her hero, with most cruel contumely,  
 Is dragged, in sight of poor Andromache.

Odysseus, deemed long dead, clad in rude  
 weeds,

Growling low in his lion soul, yet feeds  
 With little insolent men beneath the dome  
 Pertaining to him, his ancestral home :

They dare his queen, and his young heir  
 offend :

But now he draws the bow none save himself  
 can bend ;

And while they cower, divining the dread  
 end,

Throws off concealment, towers in his own  
 hall,

And turns the twanging death upon them all !

A kind of mighty pedestal upholds  
 This living imagery with green folds,  
 As were they heavings of an emerald ocean,  
 Ever young, resonant with stormful motion.

Further, as on a mass of diamond,  
 Some figures of colossal port arise,  
 With tragic face and form ; fixed by a bond  
 Of art inviolable their mournful guise  
 Of guilt and agony ; they seem to glow  
 Darkly as bronze late molten, or like some  
 Whelmed in fire-floods of Herculaneum.

Hangs the god-Titan, hurling scorn at Jove,  
 Torn by Heaven's ravening bird, implacable  
 in love.

There generous-hearted (Edipus, who  
 mocks

Sinister breathings of impending doon.,  
 Staggers beneath accumulating shocks  
 Of Destiny Divine ; then bows in gloom.  
 As a brave man with youthful strength  
 adorned

Yields to a purple smothering Simoom,  
 Or snowy whirlwinds, that he blithely scorned  
 At morning on a mountain ;

Here Antigone  
 Supports her father blind ; there one with  
 lavish locks,

Her brother slain, entombs, defying tyranny ;  
 Perishing in her youth with splendid piety.

"These works are wonderful," avowed the  
 bride,

"I love to explore their glories with my love ;  
 But I should tremble if I left your side——"

"Nay, thou shalt be at home here, O my  
 dove !

Even as one of us—once more behold  
 What marvel yonder chasm may unfold !"

A lurid haze upsteams from an Abyss,  
Immense, profound, down-narrowing gradual:  
There, as in ruby wrought, souls reft of bliss  
Agonise all around the furnace wall,  
Clean-carven in relief, as on a gem  
Blood red ; so one grim thought hath imaged  
them.

And lo ! that awful Shade himself stood nigh  
Gazing abstracted, with dread light upon  
His haggard features : then he raised his  
face ;

And those two lovers noted the full grace  
Of all the seer, with Beatrice by,  
Beheld in Heaven, where spirits who have  
won

Their crown of glory form a snow-white rose,  
Ethereal jewels ; every petal glows  
Beamingly loving, or their ardours cluster  
To a mighty eagle of empyreal lustre,  
And to a Cross immense ; aloft they noted  
those.

“Now let us pause,” the mortal urges ;  
“all

My brain reels with the marvels that appal,  
How fair soever !” the Knight folding her,  
A grateful shade involved them, and they  
sank

In one another’s arms, with no demur  
From either lover :

When they woke from slumber,  
When loving eyes of hers the lovelight drank  
From his wild orbs, did any sorrow cumber  
Their lakelike splendour ?—but he sighed  
and said :

“To a strange bridegroom thou in sooth  
art wed !

Even in my Pagan monarchy of old,  
No letter of a priestly creed might hold  
My soul, who will her ample wings unfold.  
Yet ere Christ’s Planet in the Orient rose,  
Justly and wisely did I rule my land,  
Yonder on earth ; till my rapt words dis-  
close,

One sunny eve within my castle hall  
(Lapping its portal silver waters doze),  
The phantom Future, whose far-off footfall  
Mine ears prophetic on faint-sounding sand

Of present time laid listening discern.  
And while the chiefs around all hearkening  
burn

With inspiration of my words, I rise,  
And seem to vanish from their wondering  
eyes

Within the waters of our tranquil lake.  
Mightier rulers follow in my wake ;  
A Faith Diviner, subtler joys and woes ;  
Yet ever more my wistful longing grows  
For some dear feminine heart to dwell  
with me

Here in Thought’s own profound tranquillity.  
I want a fresh, a guileless Christian spirit  
To breathe an ampler, a diviner air,  
Than in her lowly cell she may inherit ;  
So mine imperial burden one may share,  
And faithful Love’s unshamed simplicity  
Direct the challenge of keen Reason’s eye.  
So I make more, and purify my pleasure,  
By halving our unfathomable treasure.

“In summer, or in stormier weather,  
We will explore God’s wondrous worlds to-  
gether.

How often have I failed to baffle wrong,  
Because thou wast not nigh to make me  
strong !

Wrestling with loathsome coils about me  
prest,

How oft the mortal Hydra mocked my rest !  
One withering glance of thine had scotched  
the Pest !

Shall not a child from our two selves be  
born,

Who shall annihilate Error with blithe  
scorn ?

And yet, alas ! I doubt if thou canst breathe  
Freely in these my realms : they leave thee  
pale with death !”

“Nay, I will strive to help thee, and to  
live :

I chose thee : I have dared the dimlit dive !  
And yet, in sooth, my spirit seems confused  
As one who, falling far, lies dazed and bruised,  
I only fear lest, from my native sphere  
Deserting, I may find no haven here !”

Lo ! living mimes of all the human drama !  
 Swift shifting scenes of life's weird panorama !  
 Silent succeeding groups of figures gathered  
 From forth dim air, and slowly vanishing :  
 In various forms all these the semblance  
 bring

Of very men and women, yet are fathered  
 Of human Art, not nature ; all are moulded,  
 So that their inner being lies unfolded  
 In many a moment of concentrate life,  
 Wherewith their mutual-moving moods are  
 rife.

By night, upon the rock-built platform  
 standing,  
 Hamlet hath heard the sire's dread shade  
 commanding ;  
 Unwilling scattereth his life-love-blossom,  
 Whose sweet shed petals flutter in his bosom :  
 Here in her haunted room adjures the mother ;  
 Here wrestles desolate, alone with fury-fates  
 that smother :  
 Till smiting down the evil with a tardy random  
 doom,  
 He and the innocent sink with them in the  
 same dull tomb !

There a fiend-woman with red hand up-  
 braids  
 The lingering manhood, that so swiftly fades  
 Under Hell's own exorcism, when the twain  
 Their royal reverend guest have foully slain,  
 Who slept the just man's sleep beneath their  
 roof :  
 And there Macbeth's dyed soul is put to  
 proof,  
 When at the banquet rises a pale ghost,  
 To upbraid the horror-faced usurping host.

With Romeo on her heart young Juliet,  
 In Love's own garden, swears no morning  
 yet  
 Troubles the cool blue air of summer night,  
 Or moon, or stars, or Philomel's delight !  
 That was no lark-note ! bird of envious  
 morn ! . . .  
 Death meets them, and all lovers, with his  
 chilling scorn !

Further, wild laughter in stained lips and  
 eyes,  
 Fat Falstaff, full of merry jests and lies,  
 Carouses with a prince of generous blood,  
 Where in Old London a quaint tavern stood.

Cordelia implores her poor mad Lear  
 To know her for his faithful-hearted child,  
 Nor longer do her wrong ; he cannot clear  
 In his dark mind, all shattered and defiled  
 By traitor cruelty, reflect her love,  
 Once in his own blind arrogance reviled :  
 And when she dawns within his soul, the  
 dove  
 Death sneering snatches from him ; he may  
 moan,  
 Yearning remorseful for her—she is gone.  
 All lost to love and light, he may but die . . .  
 So, cursing, laughing, weeping, passes Life's  
 grim pageantry.

Behold ! what seems the ruin of the Past,  
 Sport of an earthquake, or a whirlwind-blast !  
 Where golden crosses, jewelled shrines and  
 chalices  
 Mingle with wrecks of sumptuous royal  
 palaces.  
 Rare alabaster, with embossed rich pyx,  
 From dainty lady's chamber sardonix,  
 Enamel, and flushed porcelain immix :  
 Silk from far looms, with proud emblazonries,  
 Banner, and arras, glass of rainbow dyes,  
 Drums of great column, sculptured architrave,  
 Red dust of monarch from cathedral nave ;  
 Ruby and sapphire, raiment sown with pearl,  
 Worn by fair scions of emperor and earl ;  
 King's ancient crowns, and ermines, and  
 tiaras,  
 'Mid blocks from towers fallen on the wearers.  
 The Samson-strength of Peoples hath arisen,  
 Hurling to dust the palace and the prison :  
 Goaded to madness the blind giant bowed,  
 Till all the Commonwealth's huge pillars  
 crashed with ruin loud !  
 Such chaos weltered when with furious cries  
 Mobs held blood-orgies in the Tuilleries !  
 But many a wilding bryony and bramble  
 Over the wilderness hath learned to ramble :

So grass, germander, violet, may vie  
 With malachite, or lapis lazuli,  
 In Rome, in Cæsar's palace, or grey baths  
 Of Caracalla; among sweet green paths,  
 Anemones and lilies fair enshrine  
 Red porphyries, or rich aventurine.

Upon a crowning cornice crumbling grey  
 Stand two young lovers, beautiful as day.  
 Their lips meet, and their delicate limbs are  
 twining;

Psyche and Erôs so were carven inclining.  
 There falls a sunset blush upon their white-  
 ness,

While ever and anon a pulse of over-  
 passionate brightness

Lightning-like thrills the rosy-flushing forms.  
 Opposite gazed a visage dark with storms,  
 All marred and riven, a crag tempest-worn;  
 Gazed with alternate joy, and grief, and scorn.  
 Like a fallen angel, it hath terrible beauty;  
 While fain to breathe an empyrean of Duty,  
 Its frame colossal, and sublimely moulded  
 Strains ever and anon from sloughs that  
 hold it

Among these ruins, waving a wide pinion  
 Of snowy plume, that pants to have dominion;  
 Yet fails to free the angel altogether,  
 Who seems an eagle taunted by a tether—  
 A mire, alive with myriad coiling things,  
 Draining the life-blood, mocking the white  
 wings!

Those swarthy limbs appear like lava, yet  
 Smouldering sullen: they were a fire-jet  
 From some volcano; ye, white wings of  
 snow!

Love formed you of yonder Alp, that from  
 below

Soars in high Heaven, with pure eve aglow.  
 'Tis as though ye were broken of a shaft,  
 Aimed by some cruel jealous god, who  
 laughed,

Seeing how true it speeded: writhe, O man!  
 Presumptuous Titan, thou Promethean!

Not far hence a pure Alp abides in light,  
 Gemmed with live sapphires, cloven with  
 torrents, yonder

Girdled with forests: how he soars in might,  
 While ocean at his feet makes everlasting  
 thunder!

Most wistfully the man contemplates Nature's  
 glory;

And now the undying idyl of a lover's story;  
 Now with a bitter smile beholds an altar,  
 Betwixt him and the pair; Fate will not falter,  
 Offering youth, sweet sacrifice to Death!

The very twain, whose delicate arms en-  
 wreath

Before him as alive, he sees low laid  
 Here, as on some revolt's red barricade  
 Young men and maidens, lately bold and  
 hot,

With hoary sire and little child, lie shot;  
 So these have ceased from loving, and are not,  
 Lying fair-frozen in a mortal shade.

Their names are manifold; yet these may be.  
 Who loved in isles Ionian, Juan and Haidee.  
 While he who stands, a sunset-smitten tower,  
 Leaning aside now, reaching hands of power,  
 Is called Childe Harold; Manfred; Cain;  
 the Giaour.

The limed, morass-entangled, floundering  
 angel,

A devil, as some deem, hath his evangel!  
 He sinks, he rises, he hath freed one foot—  
 Reaching a hand to lift some Manlike Brute—  
 Which is it? maimed and stunted in its  
 growth;

From sheer disuse its eyeballs blinded both!  
 Like some weird reptile's from Carinthian  
 caves,

A human thrall in subterranean graves.  
 Rags flutter from a shagged and leathern  
 frame:

Its food was blows, its daily wage was shame:  
 Famine 'mid mortal wrongs long kept it tame.  
 Shut from free light and air 'neath church  
 and palace,

This human thing lay cramped of human  
 malice,

Through dull, slow centuries, till it retro-  
 graded,

Toward brute brows and jowls, the manhood  
 faded.

See! how it crawls from forth a rift amid the  
ruin,  
Gnawing and burrowing! alas! this wrought  
the terrible undoing!

Now from the fingers of his other hand  
The form colossal filters a fine sand,  
Which seems a dust of all in the wide world,  
Immingled with red dust that hath been  
human:  
And while in smoke all vanishes, lips curled  
Appear to scoff: Behold! O man, and woman,  
Your hopes, your longings into ruin hurled!

But some illustrious spirits may be seen,  
Where that disaster of the creeds hath been.  
Bouddha, Rousseau, bold Luther, with rude  
Knox,  
Iena, with Könisberg unwandering eyes  
Bend where huge moveless adamantine blocks  
Rest undisturbed, though the fair fabric flies,  
That hath been reared thereover, like a  
mist,  
Before a blast from God's old Anarchist.  
Even as on the Lebanonian plain  
A man beholds foundations vast remain,  
Whose every stone Cyclopean hath length  
Of sixty feet, being measured; ruin-fraught  
Temples were raised upon them; all the  
strength  
Of Genii, by Solomon compelled,  
Hath poised the ponderous platform that  
rebelled,  
Thwarting man's power to found,  
One with very ground!  
So Tadmor's mighty stones were brought;  
So Duty, and Love abide, with Postulates  
of Thought.

Beside these souls illustrious are more,  
Kneeling, or standing proud; but all adore.  
Divine Love, very Christ, they worship all,  
Whether or no upon His Name they call.

Upon a cloud-ear, vaporous alabaster,  
Swift, though the rider longs to travel faster,  
Stood one, ethereal-limbed like Ariel,  
Whose spear, the sunbeam of Ithuriel,

Touched many a bulk of pompous purple  
pride,  
That lay imposing, overswollen beside  
His chariot-course; when lo! an infant's  
bubble,  
Each bursting freed the burdened air from  
trouble.

His ear was winged with plumes of sunnysnow,  
Edgeless and downy; but the front below,  
Isled in deep azure, wore a soft dove-grey,  
Heaved and recessed, with many a tender play  
Of hyacinth or harebell; visionary changes,  
As subtle-fancy'd amorous wind arranges;  
While white rims of the rear, resolved to spray,  
Evanish all in oceans of deep day.  
One-half sun's rondure the cloud-chariot stole  
From vision; half burned wheel-like; aureole,  
Relieved on opaline, of slant slim ray,  
Streamed up aloft behind the angel form,  
Whose wild eyes ever yearned to where a storm  
Of ominous thunder hath a rainbow arch,  
Shining from falling showers before his march:  
Surely he held them rain of human tears,  
Falling from founts of human woes and fears.  
In this fair Form, like Hopes, or Memories,  
Cythna, Alastor, Laon, meet the lovers' eyes.

During long weary, dreary intervals  
The spirit was compelled in his vast halls  
To leave his bride alone, while he explored  
Realms of a world wherein he was a lord.  
Realms of lone terrors, of bewildering awe,  
That fascinate adventuring souls, and draw,  
As with lodestones, or glittering weird eyes  
Of anaconda, one to snatch the prize,  
The jewel Truth from clefts of the crag  
Danger,  
Up sheer and giddy cliffs a solitary ranger:  
On steep snow-walls, where a mere whispered  
breath  
May rouse the slumbering avalanche of death;  
In dark grim chasms where daylight never  
cheers,  
Only the lammergeyer, or corven peers:  
In wintry caverns roofed with frozen tears,  
Where mystic murmuring chill waters flow,  
Rivers that are the souls of realms unrolled  
below.

He plucks the glory of the edelweiss,  
 Planting his feet in perpendicular ice ;  
 Upward he clambers with stern axe and pole :  
 What shall daunt the indomitable soul ?  
 Clouds may beleaguer with bewildering error,  
 Torrents may thunder, cataracts of terror,  
 But he will mount, till on the proudest crest  
 Sun-crowned he stands, a conqueror confessed,  
 Or hurled to atoms in the abyss unbaffled he  
 will rest.

Behold ! he flounders in a forest foul,  
 Where balefire eyes from stealthy things that  
 prowl  
 Glare on him, as he girds him unto war ;  
 And though his love must yet abide afar  
 From him contending, yet her soul, a star,  
 Beams on him holy influence from yonder,  
 Nerving his own to quell the lion-thunder.  
 Yet there too in strange frondage, or lush  
 blossom,  
 Hide youths and maidens with soft limbs  
 and bosom,  
 Who with Circean spells would lure among  
 them  
 Pilgrims for revelry ; sweet songs they sung  
 them ;  
 Yet if one rested there, a mad desire  
 Possessed him, a fierce marrow-feeding fire.

Or he must toil upon a salt-scurf plain,  
 Whose barren light beats on the burning  
 brain :  
 A sullen sea sleeps bitter to the taste ;  
 Gaunt skeletons are strewn upon a bitter  
 herbless waste :  
 So forth must fare sweet Melcha's errant  
 knight ;  
 Nor free from stain shines out that armour  
 white.  
 And she would travel with him to the strife ;  
 But wars and wanderings would wither her  
 young life.  
 Yet she may pray for him, yea, send her love  
 Hovering o'er him like a holy dove,  
 And he behold faint glimmers from her ark,  
 The while he welters, lost in waters dark.

She strove to assimilate when he was gone  
 The food that he would have her feed upon ;  
 Pondered his words, or would retrace some  
 scene,

Where with him her companioned feet have  
 been.

Alas ! the more she strove, the more she knew  
 Abysms impassable betwixt them two !  
 Not even those shades relieved the loneliness,  
 That did upon her fainting spirit press.  
 She could discern no shadowy moving throng  
 Those vast interminable aisles among.  
 Shadowy twilight ! a cold prison crypt !  
 Eternal silence ! awful glooms that slept !  
 Death weighed upon her, as she cowered,  
 and wept.

Ah ! very faintly she beheld the splendours ;  
 And hardly her bewildered memory renders  
 Account to her of what dim ways impart  
 Views of the grand creative forms of art.  
 So, unfamiliar with some ancient pile,  
 A wandering guest may lose himself, the  
 while  
 He seeks his chamber in a twilight tangle  
 Of corridor, and banquet-hall, dim cloister,  
 and quadrangle.  
 She heard some murmuring of cold blind  
 springs

Under huge crags, haunted by condor wings,  
 Where pine, or cedar to the sheer steep clings,  
 Nor ever ray of sunlight falls  
 Between stupendous granite walls.

Then she recalled what her confessor spake,  
 Warning her of weird lords below the lake.  
 For eerie things, whose semblances she saw  
 Lately within the columns, thrust a claw,  
 Or a dead hand to seize her ; so it seemed,  
 When for a moment a tall column gleamed ;  
 Muffled friar from shadowy cowl  
 Glaring with unearthly scowl.

Yea, once she met with one who seemed her  
 Knight,  
 Victorious returning from the fight ;  
 She throws her in his arms, all happiness ;  
 And lo ! she peers in horrible eyes dead-  
 white ;

The caverned bosom crumbles in her caress !

“Yet ah!” she sighed, “if he would only stay  
 Humbly with me in mine own earthly day!  
 Can I not lure him to abide in peace  
 In my forefather’s land? win him release  
 From this eternal proud disquietude?  
 Lead him to rest beneath our holy rood?  
 I fear, for all the glories that so gleam,  
 It is the unholy glamour of a dream! . . .  
 Though some profound black possibility  
 Opens before me when my Knight is nigh—  
 I dare not sound it! Madness yawns there—  
 by! . . .  
 How may I breathe here underneath the  
 wave?  
 Or I must fly, or lure him from the cave!”

So now she strove with eloquent sobs to win  
 Her fairy lover from the halls of sin;  
 For so she deemed them, weeping o’er the loss  
 Of her own homely sanctuary-cross—  
 “I cannot mock my glorious destiny,”  
 He answered, a fierce lightning in his eye;  
 “No, not for love, nor comfort, nor a  
 bride!

Wilt thou not share with me my throne, my  
 pride?”

Then he spake bitter words of foolish gall  
 Anent her faith; the faith of a mere thrall,  
 He dared aver, till she herself felt anger,  
 And there arose a hybrid-born vain clangour  
 Betwixt their loves; dull mist enveloped all.  
 A chilling feud arose from good and evil;  
 Love’s limpid springs were poisoned by the  
 devil.

“I deem that what thine incantation vaunts  
 May be but water, and long waterplants!  
 I fear thee! there be stains upon thine armour!  
 What realms hast haunted? art thou mine  
 own charmer?

Hast thou not sinned? art thou the paragon  
 I lately set my faith upon? . . .  
 Nay, if vague rumour muttered of some sin,  
 Vile men malign us, and I hope to win  
 Thee from the peril: thou wilt not be ruled!  
 Courting the wily foe, thou wilt be fooled!  
 Why leave me here in darkness over long,  
 In chase of some conundrum, or a song?

Why wage in ghostly realms a shadowy war,  
 Scorning the warm world for a phantom far?  
 I fear to lose my footing, and my goal!  
 Yea, thou hast robbed me of my rest, my  
 soul!  
 While thy proud thoughts through all the  
 world would roll! . . .  
 Thy gloomy pavements heave beneath my  
 feet,  
 And all thy pillars rocking seem to meet! . . .  
 Why did I leave my native sphere above?  
 Thou wilt be lost too! fly with me, my love!  
 And thou shalt be no more a wandering  
 wraith,  
 But our own stalwart champion of the faith!”

“Unworthy of this royal realm of mine!  
 I snatched you from the dust to make you  
 mine.

I deemed the sacred fire within your spirit  
 Smouldered; mine eager, breathing love may  
 stir it—

No queen! mere common clay, for all fair  
 seeming!

Of toys, and dress, and dross for ever dreaming;  
 In highest Heaven longing for the sound  
 Of beasts of burden on the common ground,  
 At their monotonous unsoulful toil;  
 Drawing mere water, ploughing stubborn soil;  
 That hinds, or royal, or rich, or clothed in  
 rags,

May gnaw roots, if their plodding never flags!  
 May only masks and nummeries delight you,  
 Though to full feasts of Reason I invite you?  
 Will you not let me couch your filmed eyes?  
 For all your Atys’ priests’ insensate lies,  
 Trust me! God’s day, when one is used  
 thereto,

Strikes grander than mere spangles red and  
 blue;

Or ghostly spawn of humours in sick blood!  
 Though all your sacred books pronounce  
 them good,

And God’s veracious ambient air profane—  
 Come forth, and all your juggling ghosts will  
 wane!—

Come from your blinded dungeons!—or  
 remain!”

"Shall I resign my soul, my life, my hope,  
 Among mere shadowy fancies here to grope  
 For ever? why calumniate my creed?  
 You wise ones know not all our bitter need!  
 See yon dim millions of human lives,  
 Swarming in labour's dun defiled hives,  
 Stunned with base sounds, immersed in dingy  
 crafts!  
 Dare not disdain the star, the flower that  
 wafts  
 Our unimprisoned souls! a moment lifts  
 From reeking pestilent squalors, through  
 what rifts  
 So-ever, to blue skies, and woodlands fair,  
 Fresh flowing water, and sweet liberal air!  
 Hail! soiled flower, dim star among the  
 smoke  
 O'er ruinous roofs! faint heaven-dawn that  
 broke,  
 Luminous pearl above man's misery,  
 Mute for a moment now, where lewd huts lie,  
 Surprised to shame of their own shameless-  
 ness,  
 Deep degradation, and Hell's hopelessness,  
 By the young Angel, Morning!  
Lo! one wonders,
 Wakes unaware, and sees God, while she  
 ponders;  
 Ere yet long, thin, black throats of factories  
 Soil with brown breath yon virginal pure  
 skies;  
 While, by the pearly river flowing fast,  
 She muses on a mole, with many a mast  
 Of wealth-gorged hulls from foreign lands  
 around her:  
 Diseased, debauched, God's youthful Morning  
 found her!  
 Wilt block these from the ray above their  
 roof,  
 Or hold them from the Saviour flower aloof,  
 Till they have fathomed your astronomy,  
 Or learn to babble jargonous botany?  
 Jesus, and Mary, human wants have met!  
 Why will ye rob poor souls of their one  
 anulet?  
 For me, my lot is low! I will fall prone,  
 With those dull worshippers thou dost dis-  
 own!"

He held her in his arms: he groaned: he  
 fled.  
 But on the floors of Night she reeled, she  
 stumbled, and fell dead.

Arousing, Melcha slowly gazed around:  
 Grey forms gigantic stand, with ne'er a sound;  
 Every ghost, relieved against a column,  
 Hath one vast-moulded hand enclasp-  
 ing  
 solemn

The other arm, whose hand the visage muffled.  
 Their heads are bowed, their rocky robes  
 unruffled

Fall, like a mountain flank, with gorge pro-  
 found

Grey riven: columns congregated here  
 Have thunderous amplitude: aloft they rear  
 To heights unknown, roofed over with dim  
 fear,

Forming one vasty chamber of sphered gloom,  
 On whose faint heart there weighs a huge  
 dark Tomb:

Hewn out of solid Night it seemed, in form  
 Resembling some sarcophagus enorm  
 Of Bull Osirian, disinterred by Nile  
 From dull oblivion of Time's ponderous pile.  
 As Melcha gazed, she felt One had been there,  
 To whom the world clings with sublime  
 despair.

"If He be there still, all is doubt and doom;  
 I deemed that He was risen from the  
 tomb" . . .

Stay! did she hear within the sepulchre  
 A sound? . . . "Wilt Thou arise, Deliverer?"  
 . . . She hears her own loud heart; nought  
 else astir.

"But I will ask these guardians," she said,  
 "If He indeed be risen from the dead!"  
 Then, in a whisper, daring scarce to frame  
 The syllables of that beloved Name,  
 "Tell me!" she murmured: "Is the Saviour  
 risen?"

. . . From yonder Forms, from hollows of  
 the prison,

In weird unearthly tones, the sound "Arisen!"  
 Rolled in upon her soul . . . Ah! how to  
 gauge

The dark significance of such reply?

Despair's own long-drawn wail of inarticulate  
agony!

Shall this the soul's deep yearning doubt  
assuage?

Behold! reverberations infinite

All the vast vaults and labyrinths affright

To conscious desolation, fatherless, profound,  
Whom dull Oblivion's anodyne consoled with  
slumber sound!

Lulled on its dungeon floor, the world's  
Despair

Wakes with a wail! "Arisen! would He  
were!"

And then it seemed as though, from all  
the gloom

Of never-ending hollows round the tomb,

A never-ending multitude of souls,

Inwardly weeping, cloaked in mournful stoles,

Moved from one point toward the silent grave

Of Him who came our ruined race to save.

Passing, each turned; all haggard: some in  
tears:

Every one, moving silent, disappears,

A hopeless mourner, in the Darkness facing

That night, when he emerged with melan-  
choly pacing.

But one who laughed in that dim hall

Ghastlier seemed to her than all!

At length she moaned, with voice of one  
that dies:

"Innumerable throng

Of human generations manifold! how long?

For ever shall I see your hopeless eyes?

Ah! let me perish! Ah! for mine own  
skies!" . . .

Dreamfully she hears the swells

Of water-muffled peals of bells.

### III

And with this utterance of all her being,

The appearance-world thereunto swift agree-  
ing,

Melcha flies!

. . . Lo! now she lies

In sunny grass:

Her own dear lake-land! in a water-  
glass

Shadows of green herbage flowing,

Whose leaning blades quench one another  
glowing!

On snowy petal of a frail windflower

Golden anthers hint the hour

By tremulously shadowing;

Blue shadows to air-ruffled verges cling.

Here she buries her pale face,

Rendering ecstasy for grace,

Sensible of only this,

That spring woodlands are a bliss.

Now the birch from bronzy stems

Buds alternate emerald gems,

Whose leaflets glossy glistening

Fairy-fanned are listening

Unto mellow-throated elves,

Merrily sunning their small selves,

Where a flutter of a rain

Of slim branches moves a stain

On the delicate lady-skin,

Pinky silver shadowed thin.

How she hears the turtle coo,

And a soft call of cuckoo,

The lake-ripple lispings,

Blue, blithely crisping;

Views yon delicate larch-clouds

Heaving like the masted shrouds,

Vivid green in azure sky,

Murmuring how tranquilly!

Cherry, and pink apple blossom

Hanging foam in air's blue bosom;

How she scents the woodland smell,

She remembereth so well;

Lying silent in a trance,

As in hours of old romance!

While already crosiered fern

In the sun begins to burn,

Though dim morning rime impearl

Wings of mavis and of merle.

. . . But at length upon her mind

The hell she hath left behind

Glareth dimly from afar,

Like eclipse, or baleful star,

While she gradually remembers

How her soul hath been hell's embers!

"I will humbly seek confession!  
 So relieve this dire oppression!"  
 Thinking thus, she took her way  
 To where above the placid bay  
 Stands her well-beloved chapel,  
 Near her home among the apple.  
 The lake lay yonder as before;  
 Yet she knew the land no more!  
 What hath come to wood and field?  
 No answer may her musing yield.  
 There the sanctuary appears:  
 . . . Doth it totter as with years?  
 Lo! the crucifix of wood  
 Shrined where it hath ever stood:  
 She is on her knees before it . . .  
 But what awful change comes o'er it?  
 The bleeding head bowed on the breast  
 Turns away from her request;  
 Turns from her who would be blest!  
 And she feels she cannot pray;  
 Cannot find what she shall say!

Then she enters grief-amazed  
 The rude chapel ruin-crazed;  
 Weathered beams and walls inclined  
 To and fro, as in a wind.  
 All her wild tale she reveals  
 To the priest, nor aught conceals.  
 He, much moved, and sore astonished,  
 His weird penitent admonished  
 She was wound in mortal sin;  
 And, would she salvation win,  
 Hardest penance must endure;  
 Make herself a holy nun;  
 Banish all which might allure  
 Memory of that evil one,  
 Who in guise of a white angel  
 Drew her from the pure evangel!  
 "For evermore thou shalt forsake  
 Those enchantments of the lake!"  
 This was not the aged priest,  
 Wont to serve her holy feast,  
 Before she fled away from earth;  
 And Melcha felt a very dearth  
 In her heart, when he so stern  
 Bade her love for ever turn  
 From all memory of him,  
 Yonder in the waters dim.

Yet she feared the fatal spell—  
 Christ and Heaven! Love and Hell!  
 "We may scorn not common ground:  
 God hath wisely fenced us round:  
 Within I bleed from a deep wound!" . . .

When she hath arrived at home,  
 A stranger maiden sees her come  
 (How the aged house did lean!  
 Other was the garden scene):  
 Who on Melcha's face and dress  
 Looks wide-eyed; while with no less  
 Marvel Melcha looks on hers.  
 She with the strange maid confers;  
 And, naming her own family,  
 Asks if sister, or her sire,  
 Be in the house, or near the byre?  
 The maid, with terror in her eye,  
 Replies: "'Tis near a century,  
 Since, as they tell me, one so named  
 Lived here—there is a portrait framed  
 In the old mansion, dim with age,  
 That often doth my mind engage,  
 Hanging in the parlour old;  
 A lady, of whom strange things are told—  
 How she eloped with our lake-fairy . . .  
 Like you the picture looks! ah! Holy  
 Mary!"

Then Melcha in a mournful dream  
 Turned away from where the gleam  
 Of her old home promised rest  
 To the weary and distressed;  
 While the maiden scared and pale  
 Fled within to tell her tale.

And Melcha went with drooping face  
 To her mother's resting-place.  
 But she found not the old stone;  
 In its place a whiter one,  
 Commemorative of some other,  
 Not her well-beloved mother!  
 And confusion o'er her grew,  
 When the dates thereon she knew.  
 While on a headstone sunk among  
 Grass and darnel growing long,  
 Where weather-stains and lichen gather,  
 She spells the name of her old father . . .

And now the dear name of her sister.  
 Alas! how often in fond hope she kissed her!  
 Melcha lies in the warm sun,  
 Murmuring, "I must be a nun!"

So she made herself a nun;  
 And a high repute she won  
 Among pale devotees who fast,  
 Afflict their souls, and bodies cast  
 Scourged upon the midnight stone,  
 Supplicating, making moan,  
 Lacerated with remorse  
 For sin's dark tyrannic force.  
 Yet, alas! the demon doubt  
 Was not utterly cast out.  
 Still her exorcised devil  
 Would return to hold his revel;  
 And where slept Love's own warm grace.  
 Alas! now was a desolate place;  
 In that lone hollow of her heart  
 Fiery fangs of serpent dart;  
 Nor Heaven's mild and holy balm  
 Fills her wounded soul with calm.  
 Yet fellow-feeling with the poor,  
 Enslaved and sorrowful, half wrought a cure:  
 The world-wide mystery of Fate  
 Fell upon her with all its weight;  
 But gleams of Love, and Righteousness,  
 Over the welter of distress  
 From unimaginable quarters  
 Looked here and there upon the waters,  
 Deep, wan waters of our sorrow,  
 Murmuring of dark to-morrow.  
 Yea, and kindly thought for all  
 Lifts from sorrow's lonely pall.

But they who reft of consolation live  
 Feel the sad impotence of penury,  
 When, longing some sweet cordial to give,  
 Helpless, and dumb, and void, they hear the  
 cry:  
 "A drop to cool our tongues in this flame's  
 misery!"  
 As one awaking after night,  
 Blind with blaze of sudden light,  
 To chaos was her nature hurled,  
 Paralysed for either world,  
 Since her wild audacious flight.

Now once more a gleam Elysian  
 Dawns upon her, a new vision,  
 Other than the sight of old,  
 Wondrous, wide, more manifold.  
 Then she cried, "How bitter, love!  
 Aching hollows where should be  
 Love, and His tranquillity!  
 Alas! my soul would climb above!  
 Yet if thou sink for need of me?  
 Did I well to fly away,  
 Leaving thee alone to stray  
 Ever further from sweet day?  
 In those awful wilds art lost?  
 O to clasp thee, tempest-tost!  
 Ah! my Lord! Ah! not for ever  
 From mine own thou wilt me sever:  
 Nay! my husband, thou shalt prove  
 A mightier arm, though mine remove! . . .  
 Two hearts tangled in Love's girdle golden!  
 Who dreams they shall not be holden?  
 I am faint: I seem to feel  
 Some new change, for woe or weal."  
 Then she wandered through the brake,  
 Till she came upon the lake:  
 How wistfully she gazed, and gazed  
 Where the auroral billow blazed!

Ah! what is the wild thrilling trouble  
 In the sun's blithe water-double? . . .  
 Behold, from forth the waters blue  
 Burst the spirit O'Donoghue!

He openeth wide longing arms—  
 Though where are now the earlier charms?  
 How she wavereth on the brink!  
 In mortal faint she seems to sink;  
 Yet looking on him, whispereth: "He is  
 risen!"  
 Then, all transfigured, yields her to the  
 prison  
 Of his embrace! but this her lover now  
 Shines radiant, as never he hath shone.  
 "Yea, He is risen—though I know not  
 how!"  
 Answers the other . . . and the twain are  
 gone  
 Under the sun-reverberant tide:  
 The fairy Knight hath won his bride!

## THE AGNOSTIC

A GIRL, who dared not say the Christian  
creed,

Tho' rich in kindly heart and valorous deed,  
Sang me a simple hymn with reverent tone.  
Later, before Beethoven's cloudy throne  
Symphonic, I stood, rapt and marvelling ;  
And there a vision loomed on shadowy wing.

The Maiden fair in spirit I beheld,  
Her eyes pure shrines of loftiest intent,  
Indomitable endeavour, never quelled  
By violent misfortune, nor repelled  
By dull resistance of indifferent  
Vicissitude, but ever buoyant ; her  
On a frail arch of slow dissolving ice,  
I saw 'mid mountains robed in snowy fur,  
All inaccessible, a precipice  
At either end inexorably steep,  
Banning approach ; around her slender form  
Unfathomable abysses of the deep,  
O'er her involved embroilment of the storm,  
Thundering cloud ; methought she stooped  
anon

With cordial of her glance to yield support  
Unto some faltering or fallen one  
Upon life's painful perilous pass, full fraught  
With fear, convoying from nowhere to no-  
whither ;

So teach the later sages, and her mind,  
Swayed by the mastering Magia breathing  
thither

From the Time-Spirit, so believes ; or blind,  
Or eagle-orbed, He rules the answering helm  
Of man's opinion ; but the mellow tones  
Of her sweet anthem fill the frozen realm  
With human longing ; the unhearing stones  
Prolong the strains within their hollow hearts  
Unknowning ; 'tis a hymn of piteous prayer  
For help from Him Who of His Life imparts,  
Some hold, to mortals ; but the maiden there  
So deems not ; wherefore I feel wonderment.  
Whether she sang, because the melody  
Held soothing for her soul, or if she bent  
Her loftier flight, sustaining some who fly  
On lowlier pinion faint and falteringly

With infant cradlesong they love to hear,  
I know not, but her mellow-toned appeal  
Wanders an orphan through a world of fear,  
Where none regards, nor can regard, nor feel  
With mortal man, emitting a faint ray  
Of conscious hope within the soulless gloom,  
That feebly quavers but a little way,  
For a brief while in the eternal tomb,  
That is the fathomless and infinite  
Mother of all. And still serene she smiles !

But how sustains her the eternal Night ?  
With what poor toys, with what illusive wiles ?  
There were some flowers in the ice-crevices,  
Some tiny flowers of dear seraphic blue,  
And rifts in tempest ; but are those, or these,  
Sisters to them in deep cerulean hue,  
Evanishing when born, howe'er they please,  
Sustainers of her very light of life ?  
Or is she strong for her unequal strife  
Through yonder gleams of gold upon the rock ?  
Nay, they are elf-gleams glimmering to mock !

But she adores twin visionary Stars,  
That in the abysmal hollows wax and wane,  
Strange progeny of elemental wars,  
Ravaging in chasms of the unsouled Inane !  
Duty, and Love, fair sister, and bold brother,  
To spring in very deed from such a Mother !  
Yea, spiritual tides of boundless being  
Are billowing in the soul, a moment fleeing  
From naught to naught unfathomably still :  
Ghost from the gloom the miracle of Will !

A lovely child played on the crystal bridge,  
And she played with him, they loved one  
another ;  
Alas ! he faded from the icy ridge,  
Like some soft flower, his delicate fleeting  
brother ;  
He swooned into the unholy void, he  
perished !  
While she with anguish wept the flower she  
cherished.

And yet methought that in the shrouding  
storm  
I could distinguish some ethereal form,  
As of a fair child often hovering nigh,  
Albeit no vision met the maiden's eye.

Yet on the appealing waves of her sweet hymn  
Toward her some breathing cohort seemed  
to swim.

Till unaware an ominous sharp sound  
Foreboded wreck and ruin of the arc;  
Startled she gazed into the dusk profound,  
Then calmly-grave appeared to mark  
Annihilation's face confronting her,  
While in a moment with still overthrow  
Vanished the fair arch, and his eager stir  
Of life for ever—Nay! behold the glow  
Of some divine celestial surprise  
Dawns in the dewy darkness of her eyes,  
While unsustained she falls; for lo! the cold  
Unfathomable hollow-hearted gloom  
Grew warm hearts throbbing with a love  
untold;

The iron crags, built round her like a tomb,  
Arms wound to ward with full-assured embrace!

Confused cloud-chaos, vasty vans that brood  
Expansive o'er the darkness, with a grace  
Of hallowing benediction for the rude  
Sullen death-realm, unfounded and unformed,  
Rousing a life within the grey womb, warmed  
From their abounding! O grand countenance  
Of guardian angels! once a drear expanse,  
High snows aloof, indifferent! ye stars,  
Luminous eyes, who gaze through pearly bars  
Unslumbering! . . . A childish form floats  
hither,

The same who seemed before her eyes to  
wither;

She only lost him for a little while;  
They greet again with still celestial smile.  
For righteous Love, tho' visionless she be,  
Buoys high the soul o'er death's catastrophe,  
Bears her triumphant on the central tide  
Of universal Life, the immortal Bride.

## THE DEATH OF LIVINGSTONE

### I

"No mortal power shall turn me: I arise,  
And will go forward, with my face for ever  
Toward those fountains of the sacred river,

River still guarding from all mortal eyes  
The hoary mystery of mysteries."

So vowed the pilgrim, chief of a strong band,  
Who toil to wrest from Death the twilight  
land.

A deep resolve, more grand than midnight  
skies,

Glowed in his countenance; but face and form  
Were marred and writhen with the lifelong  
storm.

While life's dark winter snowed upon his  
heart,

All wrathful elements howled forth, Depart!  
Heaven with remorseless frown above him  
bowed;

Earth rose in whelming floods to help the  
cloud.

### II

Whelmed in the wild and terrible morass,  
He wades, he swims, he flounders; he is borne  
Upon the shoulders of dark men forlorn,  
To whom the grandeurs of his spirit pass  
By glorious contagion; a foul mass  
Of foes malignant o'er the man outworn  
Clamour; disease his vitals doth harass,  
Draining the life-blood; mortal pain hath  
torn:

Until his faithfuls weave him a soft bed  
Of boughs, and bear him among flowering  
reeds

And lotus-paven waters: overhead,  
Languid from anguish, he in dreamings heeds  
An eagle at dawn, whose ghostly voice is  
hurled,

As though he called one from another world.

### III

A world of waters—sounds of solemn sea,  
As wind soughs wandering in rushes now:  
But they have built with grass and limber  
bough

A hut for him who fainteth mortally.

"Lord, let not Hell prevail! be with me  
Thou!

May I sustain the load allotted me;

And ere in England falls the winter snow,

May I be there, at home, with Victory! . . .

. . . Deep is the desolation of my soul :  
It may be I am failing ere my task  
Full-ended : in my wake no champion  
Of light is following ; where waters roll  
On fair Nyassa, Death's dark navies bask !  
Mary lies in her forest grave alone !

## IV

" Alone, her face, and one more, dear as hers,  
Avail red haunting horrors to dispel.  
O my dark race, plunged in the abyss of Hell !  
Sweet babes and women, beneath slow  
murderers !

Tortured I start from slumber—weeping blurs  
Mine eyes for memories no words may tell.

. . . Ere the young linnet in a soft nest stirs,  
I would be home, my work accomplished  
well ! "

. . . Drearly day faints, moaning into night ;  
The dark men sadly lose their fading sight,  
Cowering silent by the watchfire light.  
Beasts growl in jungles of Ilala land ;  
Far nightbirds wail on Lulimala strand ;  
Trees fire-illuminated murmur, a tall band.

## V

" Is it our people who are shouting so ? "  
The dark and tender follower replies,  
" A buffalo from far cornfields with cries  
Men scare. " . . . The spirit wanders to  
and fro,

Like some dim waters' aimless ebb and flow ;  
" Is this the Luapula ? " . . . whose surmise  
Gently the man dissolves : then in a low  
Alien tongue, and with faint, filming eyes,  
The weary wanderer wistfully inquires,  
" How far is Luapula ? " falling soon  
To slumber. . . . Later, after night's chill  
noon,

His boy-attendant, running toward the fires  
Out of the hut, where both were sleeping, said,  
" Come to the Master ! for I am afraid. "

## VI

They, rising, hasten to the cabin door ;  
Where, by a feeble taper, which adheres  
To a worn wooden travelling-case, appears  
The form of one who kneels upon the floor,

The head bowed in the hands enclasped  
before

The body. Reverent they pause : none hears  
A sound of breathing ; louder than of yore  
The low watch-pulse affronts foreboding ears.  
At length one, timid, touches the grey head.  
Stone-cold, and silent ! Livingstone is dead !  
Lifting his arms to God above the crowd  
Of trampling furies, broken, but not bowed,  
His mighty soul went out : the slave in chains  
Moans : the ghost-eagle calls : Hell laughs :  
Night reigns !

## VII

The cold hands call upon abysmal Gloom :  
Strange frondage murmurs in a darkling  
morn :

Orphaned men cower round the fires forlorn :  
Nile shrouds his fountains : the dim living  
tomb

Of Africa still closed, Death's blank-eyed  
doom,—

No face beloved, no land where he was  
born,—

Guerdons the warrior ! No prayed-for  
bloom

Of home-love crowns him ere the year out-  
worn ;

But while faint eyes look far away with trust,  
Death spurns the soul's quenched altar in  
the dust !

. . . Is all, then, failure ? Lives no Father  
there ?

Do living hearts but supplicate dead air ?

Is this the end of the Promethean

Indomitable, all-enduring Man ?

## VIII

Who calls it failure ?

God fulfils the prayer :  
He is at home ; he rests ; the work is done.  
He hath not failed, who fails like Living-  
stone !

Radiant diadems all conquerors wear

Pale before his magnificent despair ;

And whatsoever kingdoms men have won,

He triumphs dead, defeated, and alone,

Who learned sublimely to endure and dare !

For holy labour is the very end,  
Duty man's crown, and his eternal friend ;  
Reason from Chaos wards the world's grand  
whole ;

All Nature hath Love's martyrdom for goal.  
Who nobly toils, though none be nigh to see,  
He only lives,—he lives eternally.

## IX

Night melts in glory ; royal-robed Sun  
Glowingly deepens, like a martial blare,  
Awakening mountain, lake, and forest fair ;  
Assumes all Africa for royal throne.

Slaves, to the height of their great master  
grown,

With souls unfettered, and free limbs, prepare  
The wondrous march, whose Europe-shaming  
care

Made all his faithful fortitude our own,  
Enshrined for men the man magnanimous,  
A beacon for all races and for us !

Yet if no rumour had survived the grave,  
If all were whelmed in dark Ilala-wave,  
Yon very woods and waters in their dim  
Hearts would have lost no memory of him !  
They, in their mystic message to all time,  
And all the worlds, have thrilled with the  
sublime

Story of man ; God reassumes the life ;  
He crowns unseen the labour and the strife.  
Labour is full fruition in the bud,  
And faith, possession dimly understood.

Mortal defeat blows oft the clarion  
Of resurrection o'er an indolent world  
Death-dreaming, louder than hath e'er been  
blown

From visible triumph ; the freed soul unfurled  
A conquering flame, arousing the dull plain  
Of common souls to kindle in his train,  
Heroic-moulded, woke the silent dust  
To songful flowers of helpful love and trust ;  
Inspired the world's dead heart to throb  
victoriously ;

So they awake to life, who warring desperate  
die !

Yea, in the smile of some Divine deep Peace,  
Our faithful find from storms of earth release.

BYRON'S GRAVE<sup>36</sup>

NAY ! Byron, nay ! not under where we tread,  
Dumb weight of stone, lies thine imperial  
head !

Into no vault lethargic, dark and dank,  
The splendid strength of thy swift spirit sank :  
No narrow church in precincts cold and grey  
Confines the plume, that loved to breast the  
day :

Thy self-consuming, scathing heart of flame  
Was quenched to feed no silent coffin's shame !  
A fierce, glad fire in buoyant hearts art thou,  
A radiance in auroral spirits now ;  
A stormy wind, an ever-sounding ocean,  
A life, a power, a never-wearying motion !  
Or deadly gloom, or terrible despair,  
An earthquake mockery of strong Creeds  
that were

Assured possessions of calm earth and sky.  
Where doom-distraught pale souls took  
sanctuary,

As in strong temples. The same blocks shall  
build,

Iconoclast ! the edifice you spilled,  
More durable, more fair : O scourge of God,  
It was Himself who urged thee on thy road ;  
And thou, Don Juan, Harold, Manfred, Cain,  
Song-crowned within the world's young heart  
shalt reign !

Whene'er we hear embroiled lashed ocean  
roar,

Or thunder echoing among heights all hoar,  
Brother ! thy mighty measure heightens theirs,  
While Freedom on her rent red banner bears  
The deathless names of many a victory won,  
Inspired by thy death-shattering clarion !  
In Love's immortal firmament are set  
Twin stars of Romeo and Juliet,  
And their companions young eyes discover  
In Cycladean Haidee with her lover.

May all the devastating force be spent ?  
Or all thy godlike energies lie shent ?

Nay ! thou art founded in the strength Divine :  
The Soul's immense eternity is thine !

Profound Beneficence absorbs thy power,  
 While Ages tend the long-maturing flower :  
 Our Sun himself, one tempest of wild  
 flame,  
 For source of joy, and very life men claim  
 In mellowing corn, in bird, and bloom of  
 spring,  
 In leaping lambs, and lovers dallying.  
 Byron ! the whirlwinds rended not in vain ;  
 Aloof behold they nourish and sustain !  
 In the far end we shall account them gain.

### ·SNOWDROPS

O DARLING spirits of the snow,  
 Who hide within your heart the green,  
 Howe'er the wintry wind may blow.  
 The secret of the summer sheen  
 Ye smile to know !

By frozen rills, in woods and mead,  
 A mild pure sisterhood ye grow,  
 Who bend the meek and quiet head,  
 And are a token from below  
 From our dear dead,

As in their turf ye softly shine,  
 Of innocent white lives they lead—  
 With healing influence Divine  
 For souls who on their memory feed,  
 World-worn like mine.

### NOCTURNE

THE shadowy portals of dim death  
 Unfold alluringly,  
 And all my soul importuneth  
 Unfathomed worlds for thee !

O ye illimitable realms  
 Of awful amplitude,  
 From your immensity thatwhelms  
 I crave one only good ;

From unimaginable wealth  
 My soul demands but this,  
 Nor fame, nor power, nor gold, nor health—  
 A little child's warm kiss !

If I may feel him when I part,  
 And if he greets me then,  
 Unsorrowing will my weary heart  
 Forsake the haunts of men.

Ah me ! engulfed in the wild storm,  
 That drifts the lost like leaves,  
 Mine arms may never clasp thy form,  
 Where a still water heaves,

Where God's own sunlight cleaves to thee,  
 My holy little child !  
 Yet, through a storm-rent might I see  
 Thy joy, my undefiled,

I deem that I could bear my fate,  
 However dark and drear :  
 But I behold no Heaven's gate  
 From our confusion here !

I think the love between us twain  
 May raise me for awhile ;  
 Yet if the shadow of my pain  
 Would only cloud thy smile,

Ah ! move not near me, till my doom  
 Of whirlwind, ice, and fire  
 Be all accomplished in the gloom.  
 And I be lifted higher !

Our Love shall save, whate'er delays,  
 And thou be fain of all thy dole !  
 Dear Love hath many secret ways,  
 Whereby She steals from soul to soul ;  
 Are any hells beyond the rays  
 Of Her all-healing miracle ?

If the Abysses could devour  
 Thy love and mine, then all were lost :  
 But where Love breathes, a fadeless flower  
 May bloom from Death's inveterate frost !

And though the fiends would whelm me low  
With mine own sins for ponderous stones,  
Child-angels all around me flow ;  
I loved them ; they have heard my moans !

BEETHOVEN <sup>37</sup>

THE mage of music, deaf to outward sound  
Rehearsing mighty harmonies within,  
Waved his light wand ; the full aerial tides  
Ebb'd billowing to rear of him, o'erwhelmed  
All listening auditors, engulphed, and swept  
Upon the indomitable, imperial surge  
To alien realms, and halls of ancient awe,  
Which are the presence-chambers of dim  
Death :  
The grand departed haunt this mountain-  
sound !  
Cliffs, and ravines, and torrent-shadowing  
pines,  
A pomp of winds, and waters, and wild cloud  
The enchanter raises : then the solemn scene  
Evanishing, lo ! delicate soft calm  
Of vernal airs, young leaflets, and blithe birds,  
The cuckoo and the nightingale, with bloom  
Of myriad flowers, and rills, and water-falls,  
Or sunlit rains that twinkle through the leaves,  
And odorous ruffled whirlpools of the rose.  
Anon, some wondrous petal of a flower,  
An ample velvet petal, slides along  
A luminous air of summer, visibly  
Mantling a vermeil glory in the blue ;  
And now thin ice films clearest water ; now  
Our youngest angel whispers out of heaven,  
And all the choir of his companions  
Let loose their rapture on swift sudden wings,  
Sunshine released unhop'd-for from a cloud !  
Slant ravs of opal through the clerestory ;  
Dawn over solemn heights of lonely snow,  
Aerial dawn, that deepens into day ;  
A congregating of white seraph throngs,  
Who hold the realms of ether with white  
plume,  
And with a sweet compulsion lift to heaven !  
Ye, Harmonies, expand immeasurably  
The temple of our soul, and yet are more

Than earth can bear ; within the courts above  
Ye may expatiate majestic,  
Native, at home ! poor mortals hide their tears,  
With caught breath, nor may follow : moun-  
tain stairs,  
Platform on platform, ye aspire to God !  
His infinite soul who bore you is immortal,  
And ours, in whom reverberates your appeal !  
O music-marvel ! how your royal river  
Mirrors our life ; there breathes exhaled  
from it  
Sorrow and joy, and triumph and despair ;  
Your eagle flight is through the infinite,  
No barriers to prison from the immense.  
Yours the large language of the heights of  
Heaven !  
Now lonely prowls, exploring realms unknown,  
Unpiloted, beneath wan alien stars,  
Your strain recalleth, keels of lonely thought,  
Wandering in some sublime bewilderment,  
To pioneer where all the world will go,  
Now merry buoyancy, as of a boat,  
That dips in billowy foam at morning tide.  
Ye are alive with yearnings of young love,  
Or sombre with immeasurable woe,  
Sombre with all the terror of the world,  
Wild with the awe and horror of the world,  
Beglomed like seas empurpled under cloud,  
Reeling and dark with horror of the wind,  
Or pale, long heaving under a veiled moon.

Then, with the fading symphony, the  
master  
Drooped, earthward fallen through mortal  
weariness,  
From heights empyreal ; he faced the slaves  
Now silent, with stilled instruments, who  
wrought  
A fabric for his high imagination,  
A chambered palace-pile of echoing sound,  
A shadowy fane within the realms of sense.  
Drear Silence seems to him to reign ; when lo !  
A touch, at which he turns ! the audience,  
Vast, thronged, innumerable have risen before  
him !  
Unhearing the loud storm of their applause,  
He sees the tumult of their ocean joy  
Thunderously jubilant, in eloquent eyes,

And flashing gems, waved kerchiefs and  
moved feet!

So then the solitary master feels  
The heart-clasp of our infinite human world,  
And bows rejoicing not to be alone.

Ah! brothers, let us work our work, for  
love  
Of what the God in us prevails to do!  
And if, when all is done, the unanswering  
void

And silence weigh upon our souls, remember  
The music of a lonely heart may help  
How many lonely hearts unknown to him!  
The seeming void and silence are aware  
With audience august, invisible,  
Who yield thank-offering, encouragement,  
And strong co-operation; the dim deep  
Is awful with the God in Whom we move,  
Who moulds to consummation where we fail,  
And saith, "Well done!" to every faithful  
deed,  
Who in Himself will full accomplish all.

### NORTHERN SPRING

MEADOW and woodland  
Dwindle away,  
Delicate azure in  
Delicate day,  
An infinite ocean of  
Wave-like woods;  
Old elms remember  
Earlier moods,  
A young leaf-rapture  
On their gnarled boughs;  
Thorns sing a carol of  
Soft May-snows;  
The young laburnum  
Overwells,  
With peals of bloom from  
Inaudible bells;  
Sweet peals of laughter of  
Noiseless gold  
His leafy bowers  
Delight to hold!

A crimson May-foam  
Flushes fair,  
Soft yellow falls in a  
Blithe blue air.  
Daisies and kingcups!  
Children's flowers!  
They wander, and pull them,  
Hours on hours;  
A childish laughter  
Delights the day,  
Sweet heavens are happier,  
While they play;  
Golden boats of the  
Kingcups float,  
The voice of the cuckoo is  
Heard remote,  
With voice of the turtle,  
Sounds so mild,  
They breathe of the spring-time,  
Earth's young child;  
They breathe of the Peace at the  
Heart of things,  
Who hath taken the wide world  
Under Her wings.  
They tell of my boyhood,  
They tell of my boy,  
They tell of him folded  
Beyond annoy;  
The groves are a cloudland  
Of glowing green,  
With borders embosomed in  
Warmer sheen.

I who longed for the whispering cool of the  
grove  
Stole to the valley of verdurous gloom,  
Where a nightingale sings evermore to his  
love,  
As though man knew no sorrow, nor earth  
e'er a tomb.  
A bird hath a nest in a twilight of leaves,  
All woven of mosses, and lichen and  
down;  
An eye there is glistening, a bosom there  
heaves;  
You may see there love's miracle, when she  
hath flown—

Four delicate ovals, flecked faintly with wine—  
 She is guarding the mystical marvel of life,  
 The wind-flower illumines her bowery shrine,  
 And the pale flame of primrose around her is rife.  
 But the nightingale sings! how he sings!  
 what a song!  
 Clear water that falls, or meanders in day;  
 From a smooth stem of sound, that is mellow  
 and long,  
 Notes of fountainous blossom are lavished in  
 play;  
 And one of his delicate silvery measures  
 Recalls one who whips a clear watery glass;  
 My springs and my summers, aerial pleasures,  
 A fair haze, while I hearken, how fleetingly  
 pass!  
 And O what a soft-pleached musical woof  
 The innumerable melody weaveth in air!  
 More subtle and rich than the verdurous roof  
 Of foliage marrying over me fair.  
 Ye enwind with your music, enmeshed,  
 flushed with bloom!  
 I am sheathed, like a chrysalid silken, with  
 joy;  
 I forget that the world hath a grief or a  
 gloom,  
 Ye scatter your songs on the grave of my boy.  
 Ah! where are the conflict, the care and the  
 pain,  
 The cruelty, feebleness, folly, or sin?  
 O Philomel! pour your melodious rain!  
 Open your Paradise! welcome me in!  
 O lark, wild with ecstasy! lost in the light,  
 We are ever afar from your shadowless land!  
 Our Philomel, she is more near to our night,  
 More nigh to her gloaming of green we  
 stand.  
 For while her song-pulses may vie with the  
 stars,  
 We have known in the clear, limpid airs of  
 the South,  
 She hath one long low burden akin to our  
 tears,  
 Wherein joy lieth hid for renewal of youth,  
 Deliciously low, like a plaining flute,  
 Or water in moonlight, of silent foot.

Philomel is a child of the daylight and dark;  
 Where the willow-leaf bathes in the flame of  
 the moon,  
 She sings; all the night listens; not to the lark  
 Will a sorrowful heart of men turn for a tune!  
 And I think that the world, if it hold such a  
 gladness,  
 Must be sound to the core, whatsoever befall:  
 Our birds, for all wrong, sorrow, wildering  
 madness.  
 Do but echo young hearts in the heaven,  
 who know all!

THE TWO MAGDALENES<sup>28</sup>

ART thou indeed repentant? though thy look  
 Be concentrated on the holy book?  
 Thy glowing wave of bosom makes it warm!  
 Thine oval face-flower leaneth on an arm  
 Luxuriantly moulded, negligent.  
 A Mediterranean-blue robe hath lent  
 Disclosure to the undulating form,  
 Reclining languid in a shadowy place  
 'Mid murmuring leaves, and there thy mellow  
 grace  
 The Sun divines, who, passing through the  
 grove,  
 Illumines throat and bosom with still love.  
 Art thou indeed repentant? all thy youth  
 Mantling within thee! doth the perfect mouth  
 Weary of kissing? Here 'tis cool and fresh  
 For musing on the frailty of the flesh,  
 For shadowy contemplation, and sweet  
 sorrow!  
 But who may prophesy of thy to-morrow?  
 The seven devils in thee, did they go?  
 Or do they only sleep that they may grow?  
 Smouldering slumberous in thine almond  
 white,  
 They may awake with renovated might!  
 Thou, blessing the brown earth with bare  
 light foot!  
 I think they only parted to recruit.  
 When the world leaves you, worn with use,  
 ye turn;  
 Nay, rule the world-illusion while ye burn!

A later painter showed her otherwise.  
Under the domination of deep eyes,  
She knows no more these lovers, for the wings  
Of lovelier life new-born in her ; she flings  
The jewels from her, for the Pearl He brings.  
In presence of her Lord, no fair and sweet  
She knoweth, save to lay them at His feet.  
Our splendid world dies, very dull and dim ;  
The woman in her seeth only Him !

## WINTER

## I

BLUE-GREEN firs waver in a water wan,  
Save where red bole, fir-robe unmoved and  
dim,

Show the keen wizard Frost prevails upon  
Even rivers ; a low clink bewrays a slim  
Bird, who hath lighted on the marge to drink.  
Aerial webs invisible, that link

Sere, russet fern with glume of yellow grass,  
And green fir-needle, are palpable star-chains  
Of fairy jewel ; from furze-point they pass ;  
Every thin, green lance of broom sustains  
Like burden ; all are fledged with crystal  
soft,

Mist frozen in plumelets ; many a taper tuft  
Adorns the wine-stained bramble, and the  
blade,

Or bronzy twigs of trees bereft of shade.

## II

Heath white with frost, and orange reeds are  
fair,

Beneath yon sombre masses of cold firs,  
Wave-mirrored, while a silver birch's hair  
Hangs, like dark smoke, athwart the leaden  
air.

Winter upon small marish pools confers,  
As on our panes, with palms and wreaths of  
hers,

A delicate starflower beauty, rivalling  
All fragile water-petals of sweet spring :  
Adorns wine-dark, ferruginous fens and ling,  
Desolate lowlands where the bittern booms.

And now at nightfall, from where forest looms,  
A dragon train wails 'thwart the solitude  
Flame-breathing, with a long self-luminous  
brood,  
And livid, long low steam among grey glooms.

## III

Snow falls, hath fallen, all the land is white.  
Pure snow clings frozen to labyrinths of trees :  
They, in the narrow lane, aloft unite ;  
Winter hath clothed with a pure foliage these,  
Pitying them, bereft of spring's delight.  
How fairylike their veiled pale silences !  
Feathery phantoms a grey mist informing  
With beauty, as frail corallines dim sea.

Some alien planet our earth seems to be !  
Earth lies fair in her shroud and slumbereth ;  
So fair the pure white silence of dim death !  
Lo ! the sun's fleeting phantom faintly warming  
Mists into heaven-blue, while they flush and  
flee :

Budding birch-sprays hang laughing jewelry  
Of opal ice athwart the lift that clears ;  
Clinking it falls, or melts in jubilant tears.

## IV

Gaily snow flounceth earthward in the sun,  
Or frozen glistereth with icy edge  
To windward of the elm-bole ; birds in dun  
Plumage, fair-formed elves, whistle in the  
hedge,

Scatter its ermine mantle ; as they run,  
Dint earth's blithe stainless carpet ; shake  
the foam

Splashed upon all green brambles, and red-  
fruted

Hollies, or thorns, or briars, where they roam ;  
Our ever sweet-songed robin richly suited,  
And birds reserving for a leafier home,  
And lovelier lands the voice wherein love  
luted,

Erewhile in yon dead summer : shadows blue  
Nestle where beast, or man hath trodden deep  
In crisp, starred snow ; fur mantles fair endue  
Thatched roof, wain, barn and byre, while  
they creep

To a fringe of diamond icicle ; the waters  
are asleep.

Now skaters whirr and whirl, as erst, upon  
 the imprisoned grey  
 Plain of the river ; rosy children sliding,  
 shout and play :  
 Pile the illumining logs within, and let them  
 crackle gay !  
 Bright holly and green mistletoe cheering  
 our hearths we keep :  
 Warm glint the polished chairs and glasses,  
 while yule-fires glow deep.  
 But when dear babes lie dreaming, with a  
 halo near the moon,  
 And at their nursery doors are left small  
 fairy-appealing shoon,  
 There will float a voice of mystic bells over  
 earth's pale sward,  
 And sweet sad fays of memory to haunt us  
 in their sound !

1874.

## IN ITALY

By the low light of the moon, love,  
 By the low light of the moon,  
 From her enchanted swoon, love,  
 The cypress woke and sighed,  
 Beyond a wooded mountain, the sea that  
 hath no tide  
 Murmured to the moon.  
 The wilding passion-flower, love,  
 The wilding passion-flower,  
 Dishevelled in her bower, love,  
 Whispered dewy-eyed,  
 And thou near vine-immantled column by  
 my side  
 Whisperest, my flower !

POLITICAL SONNETS<sup>39</sup>

## I

GREAT-HEARTED statesman, eagle-eyed, and  
 pure !  
 Our folly, weary, as in days of old,  
 With one monotonously just, grew bold  
 To cast thy virtue from them ! We endure

(Whose honour once was like the Pole secure),  
 A shameless reign of brazen-faced Untruth,  
 Fair with false hues, the mortal foe to ruth,  
 And equal right. What golden salve may  
 cure  
 These inward wounds ? Our fiery standards  
 wave  
 Over more ravaged lands ; ah, Liberty !  
 Once, where they dawned auroral, all thy  
 brave  
 Sons rallied round triumphant ; now, the dye  
 Upon them is thy heart's blood—to the grave  
 'Tis England thrusts thee, with cold mockery !

## II

Barren the conquest of rich, populous lands,  
 When the proud conqueror, foredoomed and  
 blind,  
 Himself the very ground hath undermined  
 Beneath his legions. Wheresoe'er he stands,  
 Earth reels from his unfaith ; brute force com-  
 mands  
 Now but fierce fear, even where men's hearts  
 inclined  
 Lately to cherish his right rule, with bands  
 Of sober use, and feeling intertwined,  
 Light-bound for mutual service, lord and  
 thrall.  
 O ye stern rocks of either continent,  
 Where we do murderous battle ! will ye fall,  
 And hide from the Lamb's vengeance ? We  
 were sent  
 To bless the Lord's own little ones ; we went  
 To roll in blood and flame their homes, and  
 all !

## III

England, a tyrant ! Spirits, who have fought  
 For Progress on the bloodless battle-fields,  
 Where generous Reason's mild persuasion  
 wields  
 A mightier arm than ever anvil wrought !  
 Ye, who with life man's heritage have bought  
 Upon the block, the stake, the deadly plain,  
 Your Human Fabric, built with souls, to  
 nought  
 Falls, by the ruining hands of men profane !

England, who led the vanguard of God's host,  
 And heralded His rule to the blind world,  
 Weak, alien races, robber-like, hath hurled  
 Earthward, and grinds with armed heel! 'Tis  
     lost,  
 The Holy Cause, through Her black treach-  
     eries—  
 Freedom's great Temple-pillar prostrate lies.

## IV

Lost for a while! Nay, we repent! We  
     would  
 Cease from inhuman insolence and crime,  
 And God's high name profaned, the while we  
     climb  
 Stairs of grim Power, and Greed, defiled with  
     blood,  
 To lay before their shrine foul idol-food  
 Of human welfare murdered. We dare name  
 The God who hath abased Himself to shame,  
 And want, and death, for Love, upon the  
     Rood,  
 Sue for Christ's blessing, while we crucify  
 His poor, who are the apple of His eye!  
 Now, England sober, to herself returned  
 From orgies of deep, drugged bewilderment,  
 Invokes thee, righteous patriot, whom she  
     spurned.  
 Come forth, our Hope, Achilles! from thy  
     tent!

## THE CATHEDRAL

CATHEDRAL heights among the midnight  
     stars,  
 Ye are as mountains in sublimity!  
 Your phantom towers, aerial forms on high,  
 By whispering groves surrounded, for our wars,  
 And puny whirl of foolish strife, that mars  
 Our poor brief lives, arraign humanity;  
 The vasty fane through rifts of shadowy tree  
 Some city of departed souls appears.  
 But in the morning, solemn sounds are rolled  
 Through forest gloom of jewelled nave and  
     aisle;

Young tones swift-soaring mazy flowers unfold,  
 Now fall like dew, now float like a sun-smile;  
 The sweet wind of their music seems to mould  
 Von high fan-roof that undulates the while.

ELY, 1884.

## VERY DEATH

THERE are worse deaths than Death, for  
     Love may die,  
 And Hope, and Joy, and holy Innocency,  
 With Faith; yea, all we have leaned upon  
     may fly,  
 May fail, may change; no longer beautiful,  
 A very spirit fade to dark and dull,  
 Withering toward dissolution; firm-knit mind  
 Weltering in confusion, we may find  
 The large brain narrow, the warm heart  
     unkind;  
 And there may come an hour when we shall  
     bow  
 Our heads for him, whom we have mourned  
     till now,  
 Thanking the Powers that they resumed his  
     breath,  
 While he was yet a child, unknowing Death,  
 The very death; ourselves, who are left  
     alone,  
 Praying that we may die, and turn to stone.

## MADNESS

SHE spake of madness, telling that the worst,  
 As found incurable, was when men deemed  
 The world all happy, when misfortune seemed  
 Supreme good fortune, and the lot accurst  
 Appeared true bliss; what lowered repulsive  
     erst  
 Was changed to lovely, all-delightful gleamed,  
 Evil a cloud into blue heaven dispersed:  
 Beyond hope these illusions are esteemed.  
 'Twas spoken in good faith, unheedingly;  
 Yet they perchance the inner truth divine,

And if we hope to heal, the madman we!  
 I would such hallowed lunacy were mine,  
 Here, where some say 'tis better not to be!  
 What fool would cavil o'er this anodyne?

## THE SANCTUARY

A PASTORAL scene! a region of deep peace,  
 Where Nature and the Home dwell hand in hand

Harmonious; one finds a sweet release  
 Here from all evil and the world; the land  
 Heaves undulating mildly, and the elms  
 Lift murmuring boughs umbrageous in blue air.  
 There is a river moving in the realms  
 Of meadow, fallowland, and harvest fair;  
 A velvet lawn slopes downward from the home,  
 Illumed with flowers, to meet with a church-yard

That seems a sister; unaware we roam  
 Athwart the rill's division thitherward,  
 Nor feel a difference; for meek mild flowers  
 On velvet turf love either; the dear graves  
 Have headstone, or white cross; the quiet hours

Are told, as if in dream, to the green waves  
 That heave above the sleepers, and soft winds  
 Around the church-tower, by the voice therein.

Yon hamlet nested in his orchard finds  
 The sunny pastor hath large heart akin  
 To humble joy and sorrow; where he dwells  
 Abideth a warm halcyon atmosphere  
 Of hallowed calm, as in lone summer dells.  
 Within the house, and in the landscape here,  
 All is serenely soothing; the grave words,  
 With looks, and deeds, arise from a deep spring

Of faith perennial beneath the sense,  
 No earthly heats may doom to perishing,  
 Because the birth of it is not from hence,

But in the heart of the eternal hills,  
 Pure child of ocean and eternal sun,  
 No fleeting wealth from casual-flowing rills,  
 Cool and refreshing when the rest are gone.

In yonder church the same pervading calm,  
 For troubled souls world-weary very balm!  
 Here is a sacrificing of pure lives and prayers,  
 Of holy aspirations, and kind cares;  
 For here the brethren of the Holy Ghost  
 Worshipped and pondered, battled with the host

Infernal; here, in early morning, while  
 White wings of cloud, enjoying the sun-smile,

Pass by the mullioned window-lights in blue,  
 Soft seven-fold flame of tapers will imbue  
 With warm translucency the white wax end  
 Of either; seven-fold flame will upward tend  
 From candles culminant on either side  
 A brazen candelabrum branching wide,  
 Over an altar, in a deep twilight  
 Of cloth of gold, with broidery bedight,  
 Whereon are chalices for holy wine,  
 And crucifix of gold, the mystic sign.  
 There stands the priest white-robed, and whispers low,

While men and women reverent below  
 Kneel to receive the emblems; there is lent  
 Reposeful calm from yonder monument,  
 Where the recumbent forms absorbed in prayer

Ever abide in shadowy cool air;  
 They take no heed of our deluding time,  
 Our dewy eve, midnoon, or morning prime;  
 They, tranced to marble, ever rest in peace,  
 So that we long to be with them and cease.  
 And here awhile our weary sails are furled,  
 Here in a haven folded from the world;  
 Here we may taste awhile the bread of life,  
 And breathe an atmosphere aloof from strife;  
 A ray of comfort steals into our prison  
 From happy souls, who with the Lord are risen.



A MODERN FAUST

1888



TO MY DEAR FRIEND

HORATIO FORBES BROWN



## PREFACE TO "A MODERN FAUST"

IT has naturally been with no presumptuous desire to enter into any kind of competition with the great Elizabethan, or the great German Master that I have given to my poem the name of "A Modern Faust." But, seeking to portray a denizen of our modern world with nature and aspirations somewhat similar to those of that semi-mythical and representative Personage, I thought it not unfitting to give him the same name. For there exists a cycle of Christian mythus, semi-historical, semi-legendary, which embodies certain ideas and ideals especially pertaining to the Christian era, and which may, as it appears to me, advantageously furnish such a quarry of material for the Christian poet as the grand, familiar stories belonging to the Heroic Age of Greece—the Tale of Troy Divine, of Pelops' Line, the House of Laius, and Prometheus—furnished to successive poets in Greece. These may be handled (within certain limits) according to the idiosyncrasy of the writer and the special requirements of his own day, their subject-matter being essentially human and permanent. To this order of Christian mythus belong the cycle of Arthurian romance, Faust, Tannhäuser, and Don Juan. My own object, however, has been to write a poem dealing with conditions and problems which must press, in one way or another, upon the most sympathetic, thoughtful, and sensitive among ourselves; to portray a sorely tried and divided nature, keenly alive to human suffering, as well as to the speculative difficulties peculiar to our day and generation, arising from the conflict between science and accepted creeds; unable, moreover, to acquiesce in current solutions or panaceas, confidently propounded for the ills that afflict humanity—a nature itself disorganised and enfeebled by internal dissensions, through the warfare of higher and lower selves. I have likewise endeavoured to suggest a

certain reconciliation and harmony ultimately attained by him. It has, therefore, been with realities, rather than titles, that I have been concerned; yet to such a delineation the familiar name of Faust seemed not altogether inappropriate. Though considering its now formidable literary associations, remembering Marlowe and Goethe, who can repress a certain feeling of trepidation in thus invoking so venerable a name, lest he should be overtaken by the fate that was said to have befallen rash and presumptuous magicians, torn in pieces by the potent spirit whom they could summon, but not control?

In the generation immediately preceding ours, it would have been plainly impossible to introduce that *supernatural* element essential to the "Faust" legend, and yet make the hero a modern. Upon this neither Goethe ventured, nor Byron in *his* Faust, which is Manfred. Even Hamlet is assumed to pertain to a very remote age, though he actually belongs to Elizabethan England. But the recent revival of interest among ourselves in what is termed "occult lore" has rendered such a representation perhaps less shocking and incongruous than it would have seemed formerly. My Satan, however, is chiefly, though not entirely, the man's own worse self. And those who are still certain that there is nothing in heaven or earth undreamed of in their philosophy may charitably reflect that, after all, the whole phantasmagory is intended to pass in a dream!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The incidents embodied in the section "Earth's Torture-Chamber." I am sorry to say, really happened, though, to soften the horror, I have modified them in detail. They were cases dealt with by the excellent Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Some other incidents also, illustrative of mischance and suffering, are founded upon fact. I have used prose where it seemed appropriate to my subject-matter.

# S U M M A R Y

## PROLOGUE

### BOOK I.—INNOCENCE

Religion.

### BOOK II.—DOUBT

Adventure, Love, Loss—Lost Lamb.

### BOOK III.—DISORDER

CANTO I.—Earth's Torture-Chamber—The Holy Innocents—My Little Ones.

CANTO II.—The Flesh—Triumph of Bacchus—Siren Song—Pan.

CANTO III.—The Ascetic Life—Devotion—Speculation—Lyric of Thought.

### BOOK IV.—DISORDER

Prose Interlude—The World ; or, The New Walpurgis Night—The World in the Church—  
The Palace of Art—Good Society—Respectability—Babel, and Will-o'-the-Wisp—  
Ragnarok—Stump Oratory—Bewilderment.

### BOOK V.—DISORDER

CANTO I.—Nature—The Sea, and the Living Creatures.

CANTO II.—Misfortune—Advocatus Diaboli—Mad Mother.

CANTO III.—Satan.

### BOOK VI.—ORDER

CANTO I.—Heaven—Fountain Song.

CANTO II.—Heaven's Ministry.

CANTO III.—Faith.

CANTO IV.—Human Service—Songs of Golden Deeds:—*Charity ; Gordon ; The Life-boat ; Sea Kings ; The Isle of Lepers ; " Weak Things of the World ; " World-Progress ; Mother's Love ; Jubilee, and the Good Emperor.*

CANTO V.—Wisdom and Work—Caged Lark.

## A MODERN FAUST

### PROLOGUE

THE vision of a Pilgrimage  
Made in this our modern Age  
By one who went from faith to doubt,  
Through all the evil rabble rout  
Of mad disorder, and new lore,  
That saps foundations firm before.  
Many men, and many lands  
He wandered over ; mind expands ;  
The heart by loving learns to love,  
And more by losing ; darkly throve  
Foreboding also, when the rod  
He saw the oppressor wield, who trod  
On human hearts, the doubt of God.  
Yet, charging all on man, he goes,  
In part for solace, to the shows  
Of world-illusion, by fair sense  
Held captive ; when delivered thence,  
Suffereth for that offence  
In cloisterly, devout seclusion.  
Him the importunate confusion  
Following, hales from meditation,  
Where, far from earthly tribulation,  
He lies, with action closely furled,  
Pondering the riddle of the world.  
Involved in pensive solitude  
The hermit may no longer brood ;  
Wave-washed from his rock-island home,  
Once more affronts the wandering foam.  
A pretty boudoir of toy Art  
Surveys, but only to depart.  
World's indifference he tries,  
Behind respectabilities,  
Which are as walls built thick and high  
To ward offence from ear and eye.  
And yet his heart obeys the lure  
Of sundry, who propound their cure  
For social sickness ; curious mind  
Blindest leader of the blind

Will follow ; but, alas ! no goal  
Crowns who yield to their control ;  
Long builded order fades away  
From these, who to the desert stray ;  
Nor hoped oasis beams upon their way.  
Then, finding refuge in lone Nature,  
He, wearying of her mystic stature,  
Returns where poor Humanity  
Doth agonise, do evil, die,  
On icy heights, amid the scorn  
Of gods and demons, vulture-torn !  
Learns at length that not alone  
Fault of ours hath wrought our moan.  
Whence cometh evil, who shall say,  
In man, the creature of a day ?  
The dumb Sphinx-Nature dooms no less  
Than men, though ne'er so pitiless ;  
Turns her thumbs down, votes for death.  
The whole creation travaileth  
With conflict, suffering, and care ! . . .  
Spirits in the murk of air  
Wail and whisper doubt, despair ;  
Whom angels answer, to dispel  
Inner night that o'er him fell.  
He dared the invisible invoke,  
And so the mirthful scorn provoke  
Of latter-day omniscience,  
That doth all knowledge, save through sense,  
Prohibit ; yet he deemed there spoke  
Voices verily to him,  
And forms unearthly, fair, or grim,  
Came palpable, now pale and dim ;  
Yet often hard to be divined  
He found it, if to his own mind  
Or theirs a thought should be assigned,  
Believing he the problem solved  
By holding both alike involved . . .  
Last, Devil-driven to end all,  
Enveloped in Despair's bleak pall,  
Love plucks him from the final fall ;

Offers hope and mercy mild,  
 In guise of a dear little child ;  
 With olive-leaf from forth the dark,  
 A dove taps at life's wildered ark.  
 And so the prodigal comes home,  
 Though not to where he wandered from.  
 Scarce may any wanderer find  
 The very place he left behind.  
 But he returns to faithful labour ;  
 In Art reflecting Nature, neighbour,  
 And a soul wherever lay  
 Brooding problems of to-day,  
 As in a lonely mountain lake  
 Mirrored vapours roll and break,  
 Sullenly involved, unravel,  
 Murmur tempest while they travel.

Apollo with the Python wages  
 Awful warfare of the ages !  
 It may be the All draweth breath  
 From good and evil, life and death.

A dream of childly happiness,  
 A dream of children's dire distress ;  
 A vision, fain to reconcile  
 Powerful oppressions of the vile,  
 And what appears a casual slaughter  
 By elements of fire or water,  
 With Love and Righteousness, which are  
 More than earth, or moon, or star,  
 Grandeur than the night and day,  
 World-foundation old and grey.  
 If aught more real lie below,  
 It is not less than these, we know ;  
 May only complementary lie  
 To their sublime eternity.

## BOOK I.—INNOCENCE

### RELIGION

A SUMMER morn, a church among the  
 trees,  
 A mullioned hall ancestral, and by these  
 Low rural homes ; a river gently flows  
 Through green demesnes ; wide, antlered  
 woods half close

Upon a village church among the leaves,  
 Grey-towered, grove-embowered, calm and  
 cool ;

Thereof a vision to my memory cleaves,  
 How rare and radiant, pure and beautiful !  
 Before the rustic ritual began  
 With music, or the priest, white-raimented,  
 And choir entered, glad surprise there ran  
 Through me to note, where shadowy arches  
 wed,  
 A cherub form advancing all alone,  
 With golden-curved head, unashamed young  
 face,  
 And air that wakes the passive cold grey  
 stone

To silent benediction on the grace  
 Of moving innocence, half bold, half shy,  
 Advancing like a sunbeam from the porch  
 With timid reverence and a laughing eye.  
 He glides among the monumental marbles,  
 Reposing warriors of his ancient line,  
 Stone feet upon the lion ; old time garbles  
 Their graven story ! play, war, women, wine,  
 Church, statecraft held, who want not, nor  
 repine.

He looked athwart dim spaces of the church  
 To where his gathered folk awaiting sat,  
 With linked looks of encouragement. Per-  
 chance,  
 In the fair garden home at hand made late  
 By some mishappening light circumstance,  
 Dubiously laughing, he resolved to dare  
 The long way unaccompanied. The child  
 Seemed rather born from the pure atmosphere  
 Of all the prayers and praises undefiled  
 Heart-offered here through centuries ; so clear  
 His eyes and colour, his rich locks a mist  
 Of fountained gold ; the sun loves nestling  
 there ;

Rude congregated men and women blest  
 Their heavenly visitant ; the chaste cool air  
 Among grey spaces cherished the fair guest.  
 Yea, and more watchers than dull eyes behold,  
 From whom ethereal consecration flows,  
 Clothed him in armour of enchanted gold,  
 Molten in Love's fire, mined in hearts of  
 those  
 Who face the Father. Then low music woke

Within the bosom of the calm abode;  
The hushed wave of rapt adoration broke;  
A boy's clear tones peal forth pure faith in  
God.

From a more affluent lot in life he comes,  
The darling; but in many humbler homes  
Have I not found a mother, like Madonna,  
The cherished burthen of her child upon her,  
Or beautiful, or homely, hollow-eyed,  
Pale with privation, toil-worn for her pride,  
Her joy, the little ones for whom she wears  
Out soul and body, shedding but few tears—  
Where is the leisure for them?—o'er the  
pillow

Of some sick infant, unremoving willow,  
Bent day and night, how eager to fulfil  
The meanest function for one lying ill!  
While well-loved kindly father loves to carry  
His little bare-foot Jane, or crippled Harry;  
And tiny folk will frolic in dim alley  
As were it purple hill, or dewy valley;  
Will play their blithe life-drama in a mean,  
Poor, walled-in, soiled apology for green,  
As were it lovely park, or forest scene.  
They to the monkey-crowned street-organ  
dance

More gay, more fair than all fine folk in  
France,  
At court superb of their grand monarch met,  
To languish through the stately minuet.  
Such homes are blessed, even when cruel  
want

Invades, though shelter, food, and clothes  
be scant.

I joy to know the children's joy as common  
As kindness for them among men and women.

## BOOK II.—DOUBT

### ADVENTURE, LOVE, LOSS

THE boy, a youth now, roved in foreign lands,  
By palm and temple, over burning sands,  
On camels and on horses, noting men  
And manners many; mountain, forest, glen,  
Populous human hives, and alien

Taste, habit, ethnic custom, ethnic creed,  
Whereby, as by the late-born Lore, a seed  
Was sown of gradually matured misgiving,  
If circumscribing faiths exhaust the living  
Spirit of universal God indeed?

Their niggard nourishment may hardly feed  
The hunger of the human; whose wide heart  
Revolts from putting for the whole the part,  
From an All-Father, who hath favourites,  
Vainglory, pride, and arbitrary spites,  
Revengeful jealousy! how many bands  
Are loosened while the growing soul expands!  
Some wholesome, dear, familiar; wars engage  
The upheaved, rent spirit, awful wars to wage!  
A lone, long conflict, doubt, and grief, and  
rage! . . .

In holy lands, in homes of ancient faith,  
He journeyed, where our sacred story saith  
The dear Lord lived and died for us; he  
mused

Among the fallen pillars of disused  
Shrines around Hermon or Mount Lebanon,  
Whence all the worshippers and faiths are  
gone;

Or in the golden-columned Parthenon,  
The hills of olive near Jerusalem,  
Far, fair Palmyra, holy Bethlehem;  
Where silent and serene Egyptian Nile  
Engirdleth Philæ, palm, and peristyle,  
Nourishing Thebes and Memphis; floating  
long

With moonlit sail, and oft a weird wild song  
From dusky crews, where gorgeous eves illumine  
Sphinx, flame-y-pointing pyramid or tomb,  
Storied with old-world mystic hieroglyph;  
There kings lie jewelled in the fiery cliff;  
Solemn and silent in the chambered echoing  
cliff.

Then rude and strange adventures him befel  
With lithe and swarthy sons of Ishmael,  
Full-vestmented in rainbow hues, fierce-eyed,  
In Arab tents, or where dark men abide,  
In marble-fountained courts by Abanar;  
Behind fine lacework of the lattice are  
Gazelle-limbed beauties; realms of myrrh  
and musk,  
Where in the warmth of an enchanted dusk

The minareted Muezzin calls to prayer,  
Thrillingly waking a clear starlit air,  
And one from Europe, wondering to be there.

And now beneath the whispering young  
palm,  
Enjoying dewy evening's hushed calm,  
He whispered with a beautiful lithe maid,  
Who wore red flowers in her hair's dark braid;  
The girl had limpid eyes, a mellow tone;  
Her body girdled with the enchanted zone  
Of Venus queen; clear orbs came one by one  
Through darkening ether, found them dally-  
ing on;

At intervals they may behold them rise;  
Only they pore on heavenlier gleams in eyes  
Of one another; youth, and early love!  
But Fate, with flaming sword, asunder drove,  
And shut them out of Paradise.

Afar,

Beyond the wave, beneath a northern star,  
Once more I found him with a blonder fere,  
His faithful, helpful life-companion, dear  
And beautiful; who smoothed his fevered  
pillow,

Plucked with devoted hand from death's dim  
billow;

Saved him, moreover, from a direr death,  
Wherein sense robs of our Diviner breath.  
Who saith the heart loves once, and never  
more?

The youth loved twice, and both for evermore  
His heart holds; yea, the clinging tendrils  
twine

Round others fondly, passionately incline  
To many a comrade, male or feminine.  
Unto these later lovers was there born  
A perfect child, fair, breezy like the morn,  
All laughter, light, affection, health, and song,  
Who, like a rill, danced near their path along,  
But unaware fell into some abyss,  
And left life songless, shadowed, reft of bliss.  
Inventive leader in the nursery games,  
Tender, considerate of alien claims,  
Full wonderful to witness in a child!  
Reflection budding in the leafage wild  
Of his luxuriant joy; the parents said,  
"A glorious manhood when we both have fled,

One may divine for him; our staff and stay,  
When our own buoyant strength of life gives  
way,

Our son shall prove to us." In one brief year  
Their living sunbeam shone no longer here!  
He was no more; the wild fate-sunken twain  
Were left to wail, and yearn for him with pain  
Immense, deep, unassuageable, and vain.  
If ever shadowy difference involved,  
His young life-shining all the cloud dissolved;  
And now their marriage-bond more binding  
grew

Over a little grave poor grief well knew.

#### LOST LAMB

He is gone, he is gone,  
The beautiful child!  
He is gone, he is gone,  
And the mother went wild.  
Babble all silent,  
Warm heart is cold;  
All that remains now  
The hair's living gold!  
Summer hath faded  
Out of his eyes,  
On his mouth ne'er a ripple  
Of melodies!  
O where will be joy now,  
To-morrow, to-day?  
O where is our boy now?  
Far, far away!  
Light is but darkness,  
Unshining from him;  
Sound is but silence,  
And all the world dim!  
Spring's in the air!  
I feel him to-day,  
Spring's in the air,  
He's on his way!  
Warmth in the air,  
Cold in my heart,  
Winter is there,  
Never to part!  
Snowdrop asleep in the  
Loosening mould,  
Crocus apeak with thy  
Flame-tip of gold,

Lark song who leapest  
Aloft, young and bold,  
My heart groweth old, for  
Joy lieth cold!

So lisped be the sweet alphabet of love;  
The lesson will be fully learned above.  
A gentle saintly mother, through her blood,  
Him with the germ of heavenly birth imbued;  
Later with warm and holy influence  
Cherished the pure life her dear veins dis-  
pense;  
So learned he love; fair maidens taught him  
now;  
Many were very kind to him, I trow.  
Better he learns yet from the eternal tie  
True marriage, soul and body, may supply,  
And from young children; chiefly from the love  
That through life-loss well nigh to madness  
drove:  
They feared the child extinguished, and the  
doubt,  
With tears rebellious, all light put out.  
And yet I deem them sent to sorrow's school  
Only for love-lore wide and plentiful.  
But in that youth ancestral spirits fought  
To wrest for wickedness, and bring to nought;  
He was a battle-ground for good and evil,  
Like him for whom bright Michael with the  
devil  
Contended. Ah! sweet Heaven, a parlous fate!  
And who, save God, may know the final state?

### BOOK III.—DISORDER

*After, the youth, to manhood grown, related  
The stations of a life-experience,  
In guise of vision; fact, or parable;  
Momentous hours, firm chisel blows whereby  
A character assumed decisive mould  
For good or evil; he began to tell  
His proper story from the point where I  
Relinquish now; the whole in guise of dream,  
Scenes pregnant with a life-compelling power,  
Or symbolising steps in a career;  
And these the well-remembered words he spake.*

### CANTO I.—EARTH'S TORTURE-CHAMBER —THE HOLY INNOCENTS

HE said, "The vision before all will show  
What branded deep into my heart world-  
woe. . . .

"A little boy runs hurrying to school,  
When lo! a toyshop very beautiful!  
The broad glass front shows every kind of  
toy,  
Just fit to take the fancy of a boy.  
He pauses; looks; he sees some spinning  
tops:  
O drowsy humming when it whirls! then flops  
Down after many giddy drunken reels!  
How has he longed for one!—Ah! now he  
feels  
Two pennies in his pocket,—the school fees!  
He may not buy, he knows full well, with  
these!  
And yet withhold not your commiseration,  
Ye elder folk, who have yielded to temptation!  
An impulse urged him, scarce controllable;  
He is a little child! be pitiful!  
Unless ye ne'er yourselves have been to  
blame.  
His father (irony bestowed the name!)  
Being himself without a single sin,  
Resolved to let all hell loose, and so win,  
If may be, this most evil child of his  
From such ineffable debaucheries.  
He flogs this feebleness with furious strength  
Of a brute's bulk full-fed, until, at length  
Run down, it craves recruitment from a drink  
Of fire at some street-corner; see him sink,  
The boy, stripped bare for beating, on the  
bed,  
Moaning in anguish! but his childhood led  
Him, like a fairy, to forgetfulness;  
For in the interval of sharp distress,  
Diverted he may note a spider dart  
Down the fine web it wove with subtle art  
To whirl a fly within the silken toil,  
Where it may leisurely devour the spoil.  
Yea, any other trifle, that can catch  
The light attention, he may feebly watch,

Albeit half-whimpering, for yet he feels  
 Dull inextinguished aching of the weals.  
 The outer scene may merciful beguile  
 From him a tearful, poor, bewildered smile,  
 Alluring flexile fancy from the rod,  
 Wherewith the 'father' plays at angry God,  
 Enacts rehearsals of the 'love' of Heaven,  
 Or that Supreme Assize; till devils seven  
 Return with the tormentor; at the Frown  
 That enters the torn victim cowers down,  
 Praying, with prayers that might have moved  
     a stone,  
 Forgiveness; he will do so never more!  
 Yet with red rope-thongs every bruise and  
     sore  
 The tyrant lashes. Then such wild wind-  
     wails  
 Are heard, that even dull Indifference pales,  
 Shaking the door, though vainly; the dread  
     clamour  
 Is drowned now when, with handle of a  
     hammer,  
 The ruffian strikes his own child on the head,  
 Until he falls in swoon, or haply dead.  
 And God doth not shake in the shuddering  
     wall,  
 To bury what must hurl to fatal fall  
 Love, justice, mercy, here and everywhere  
 Swooning in dumb renouncements of despair,  
 Or sinking to foundationless abysses  
 Of thought-confounding chaos—where one  
     misses  
 At least the spectacle my soul beholds,  
 The world-wide spectacle, alas! that holds  
 Fiends thronged in earth's red amphitheatre,  
 Attentive to the sanguinary stir,  
 And sniffing gloatingly the cruel steam  
 Of torture and oppression; with fierce gleam  
 Infernal of hot glittering eyes they watch  
 The unending human tragedy; to snatch  
 Maniacal, malformed joy in some den,  
 Where deeds, beast-banned in savage moun-  
     tain-glen,  
 Assault, insult, the light by being born.  
 Prisoned in brothels, helpless and forlorn,  
 Ah! God, the very babes, for worse than  
     death,  
 Are pinioned by tyrants, with rank breath

Of moral plague infected, yea, deep dyed  
 Their lamb-white souls and bodies; crucified  
 Their clean flesh, only that they may subserve  
 The orgasm of a flaccid satyr's nerve;  
 While panders whom the hoary goat can pay  
 Batten upon Christ's little ones for prey!  
 Ah! thought to turn a young man old and  
     grey!  
 Their parents sell them—it is done to-day.

"Now, while I stand within the room,  
 And wring my hands above the piteous doom  
 Of this poor murdered child, fallen pale and  
     still,  
 A mere inanimate heap, at the curst will  
 Of Tyranny, the vile, plague-spotted place  
 Teems thick with shapes of manifold disgrace  
 Ineffable; they breathe in the murk air,  
 Like maggots in a carcase; coiling there  
 Over each other, thronging like pale worms,  
 That interlacing shake misshapen forms  
 In horrible jubilation; hear them hiss—  
*'Do you believe in God, fool! after this?'*  
 See yonder spider at his ease devour  
 The impotent winged insect in his power!  
 And yet, I gasp in answer, white and wan,  
*'Charge all upon the wicked will of man!'*  
 One chuckling discord from the fearful clan  
 Resounded, a thin, evil shadow-laughter;  
 I shuddered, fainted—and the scene changed  
     after.

"Ah! now I roam  
 To a yeoman's home;  
 Meadow-bounded,  
 Flower-surrounded!  
 From year to year  
 Inhabit here  
 Well-thought-of people,  
 Anigh the steeple;  
 Pledged ne'er to drink,  
 They frugal sink  
 In a bank for savings  
 The yield of slavings,  
 A hoarded thrift,  
 And for soul-shrift  
 Are oft at chapel;  
 They pile the apple

In yonder loft,  
 Manure their croft,  
 With cart in byre,  
 With hens in mire,  
 A horse in stable,  
 Good food on table,  
 And soft grey wings  
 In a mossy roof,  
 While robin sings  
 On a fence aloof;  
 A paradise,  
 With ne'er a vice,  
 Verily  
 The place should be! . . .  
 But *is* that cell  
 In the gaol of hell,  
 Where (sight appalling!)  
 One saw crawling  
 Babes span long,  
 Who had done no wrong,  
 Save to inherit  
 Eve's demerit,  
 And not have been  
 Washed quite clean  
 By Church's chrism  
 From Serpent-schism.  
 For as little reason  
 (But I talk treason!)  
 Some babes on earth  
 Are seared from birth  
 With a brand of doom,  
 To which the tomb  
 Were mercy mild,  
 Pure, undefiled;  
 Nor old divine,  
 Nor the Florentine,  
 Ever invented worse than this  
 For his own, or God's own enemies!  
 The house is haunted  
 By an apparition  
 Of a little child! . . .  
 Hallucination!  
 An evil dream! . . .  
 And yet 'tis there!  
 The very semblance  
 Of a little child  
 Upon the stair,  
 The bones protruding,

Pale skin and bone;  
 His face a fever,  
 A famine glare  
 In pits for eyes.  
 The skeleton  
 Hath a load to carry,  
 A heavy load,  
 Two flat irons,  
 One half his weight:  
 Up and down  
 The old wooden stair,  
 All through daylight,  
 And half through night.  
 Up and down  
 The phantom flits,  
 Tramps with a load,  
 It scarce can carry. . . .  
 Ah! when to sleep?  
 For never rests he  
 From that vain labour,  
 Save to stumble,  
 Or fainting fall,  
 Or when a boy  
 (One said a brother)  
 Shares crusts with him  
 In secrecy;  
 Or when the woman,  
 At ease below  
 (The father's wife),  
 Unlivesustaining  
 Meagre morsels  
 Doles for food.  
 Nay, nay, 'tis living!  
 And all too true!  
 The boy hath taken  
 A hunch of bread;  
 And now she beats him  
 With rods of thorn;  
 (The Lord wore thorn!)  
 He drops the irons,  
 Outworn at last;  
 (The Lord so fainted,  
 When He bore the cross.)  
 And now inflaming  
 With an evil salt  
 The old raw wounds,  
 She flogs again.  
 Such deeds were done

In days long dead,  
 For the glory of God,  
 At God's command.  
 I know ! I know !  
 Ineffable orgies  
 Of the carnival  
 Of human crime  
 Are old as time !  
 Yea, uncommanded  
 By God the Lord,  
 Who doth them now ?  
 If uncommanded  
 By God the Lord,  
 How do them now ?  
 The wife, reclining  
 In a warm armchair,  
 Darns diligently ;  
 Anon she feeds  
 A sleek furred cat.  
 The man, the father,  
 Luxuriously  
 Inhales, and blows  
 The curled blue cloud,  
 And lets her murder  
 His only child.  
 He sees and hears  
 The living ghost  
 Of his only son  
 Tramp up and down,  
 And sleeps at night,  
 Nor dreams of it.  
 The demon woman  
 Benumbs the man,  
 While God alloweth  
 The vital air  
 For a human soul,  
 Belief in love,  
 The love of love,  
 With the breath of life  
 For a human body,  
 To be slowly drawn,  
 Sucked forth from it,  
 And makes no sign !  
 The child's dead mother  
 Makes no sign !  
 Ah ! that the mother  
 May be dead indeed,  
 And may not know !

This is a child, sir,  
 A child indeed, sir,  
 Like yours, like mine ! . . .  
 See, now he dies ;  
 One certifies  
 ' A natural death ! ' . . .  
 Listen ! low convulsive laughers  
 Awaken old worm-eaten rafters !  
 Some mutter, '*Do you now believe in  
 God ?*'

"Once more a mean room in the huge  
 dim city !  
 No fire, no food, no medicine, no water,  
 No sheet, no blanket, and no coverlid !  
 A sick child on a pallet left to starve  
 Between bare walls ; the wind bites keen  
 with frost.  
 Alone in London ! Dismal Nights and Days,  
 Dumb warders, alternate their kindred gloom  
 Grimly by her death-bed, indifferent.  
 —Days, long lone intervals of demi-darkness,  
 Whose are hoarse cries, foot-trampings, and  
 far wheels ;  
 Ah ! never any kindly voice for her,  
 Meaningless murmurs, unconcerned for her ;  
 Nights of ear-ringing, terrifying silence,  
 Save for some drunken ditty of sodden harlot,  
 A windy flare of fallow flame without—  
 Unsoothed, untended, and, ah ! God, unloved !  
 Her scant frock, faded cotton ; while the  
 pair,  
 Whom men name 'father,' 'mother,' at their  
 fire  
 Feed, warmly clothed, unheeding, near, be-  
 neath her ;  
 Who cannot turn herself upon the bed,  
 Her bones protruding, lying upon her sores.  
 There comes no comfort, and no care, no kiss,  
 No drop to drink, nor crumb from the full table  
 Of these, who want their own child buried,  
 where  
 An elder mouldereth, whose fate was hers.

"In these well-fenced carcasses a hollow  
 Gapes where the tenderest of all hearts should  
 be,  
 A parent's heart—the devil did this for jest—

Their child would love them if they would  
allow her!

Wealthy must they be who can toss back love,  
And spill, or spurn it as a common thing!  
The child had one strange friend, a folded rag,  
Of which she made a pet for lack of dolls;  
She communed with it daily, and at night  
Her wasted cheek lay over it; she named  
It *Tatto*, lavished all her heart on that,  
Because none other wanted her poor heart.  
And when the rude, hard undertaker came,  
He laid the cold, unkempt, dishevelled head  
Upon the small soiled fetish of a rag,  
Inside the coffin; for he found it clasped  
In her thin hand what time he took her  
measure

For burying; to his mate he only said—  
'Poor little thing! we'll put this in with her!'  
His was perchance the only kindness shown  
her,

Less orphaned in her death than in her life.  
Surely he gave his small cup of cold water! . . .  
Ah! God! ah! God! art Thou but a fair  
dream

Of our distracted pity? couldst not find  
For solace of this child, to fill the place  
Of these most fearful beings, masquerading  
In guise of man, one common human heart?  
For she was all ungirt with mystic light,  
That panoplies the martyred patriot,  
Or saint; fair well-sustaining effluence  
Of the soul's inner hidden Holy of holies;  
The glory that illumines the lone steep  
Of causes championed to the uttermost,  
Irradiating subterranean  
Dark dungeon, paling the full jewel-blaze,  
And cloth of gold in courts and thrones of  
kings.

This youth is one dependence, wants our help  
As emptiness wants filling of the air.  
Parents to fail their little one! As though  
The sun should fail the morning, or the rain  
Fail wells, and rivers, and the dancing spring!

"How clear the auroral atmosphere  
Of dewy, childly joy!  
But children close their fans for fear  
At shadow of annoy,

And you may shut them from their light  
With your huge bulk of ghostly night;  
So soon as you withdraw your shadow,  
They will re-open on the meadow,  
And with a sunny laugh  
How cheerily will quaff  
Your newly shining smile  
In a very little while!  
Ah! they will kiss the very hand  
That dooms them to a loveless land,  
Or scars them with a cruel brand.  
What a curse that kiss will be  
To guilty souls, awaking in Eternity!

#### MY LITTLE ONES

"Ah! little ones! my little ones!  
When will your sorrows end?  
We deemed you daughters, deemed you  
sons

Of our Eternal Friend!  
Yet ever tears of blood we bleed  
Above your bitter mortal need!  
I deem that it may be your part  
To break, and melt the world's hard heart:  
And when ye know, ye will rejoice;  
In Heaven, will you give your voice  
For earthly pain, your own free choice?  
In the life that follows this,  
Will you, with your forgiving kiss,  
Pile the saving coals of fire  
On cruel mother, cruel sire?  
Little ones, my little ones,  
Ah! when will be the end?  
We deemed you daughters, deemed you  
sons

Of more than earthly Friend!  
We want you fair, and hale, and strong,  
Full of laughter, mirth, and song;  
For when we hear you weep and moan,  
Our Lord is shaken on His throne!  
If later years be dull and sad,  
Leave, O leave the children glad!  
Little ones, my little ones,  
However all may end,  
Earth may fail, with moons and suns,  
But never, Love, your friend!  
For Jesus was a little child,  
And God Himself is meek and mild.

"Nay, but there came here no deliverer,  
 No glance, no tone of kind alleviation;  
 The neighbours are aware of the slow murder;  
 And yet none knocks to save; arrests the man.  
 Encountered in the workshop, in the street,  
 None shakes from him the torturer's red hand;  
 But loungers lounge, and merry-makers  
     hurry;  
 While floors, and walls, and ceilings keep  
     the same  
 Abominable immobility,  
 As when some mother's burning heart of  
     hearts  
 Bleeds, breaks above the interminable pain,  
 And slow extinction of her youngest-born.  
 The sunlight, soiled with coming to these  
     courts,  
 Lurid, or livid, day defiled with smoke,  
 Faint moonlight, timid starlight, went and  
     came;  
 They saw, or saw not; went, and came  
     unheeding!  
 All these contemplate with the same dull stare  
 The widow's only son restored to her  
 From Nain's cold bier by Christ, and  
     Clytemnestra,  
 The baleful woman, with her false feigned  
     smile,  
 Snaring the hero in her toils for slaughter!

"Then mocking spectral tones assail mine  
     ear—

'*And do you now believe in God, good sir?*'  
 I sobbed, 'Charge all on the free will of man,  
 Or on our old ill-built polity,  
 Social extremes, our ignorance!' Mine eyes  
 Fell on the father deep in a learned book,  
 'On Floating Germs,' by our great physicist;  
 Fell also on rare coleoptera,  
 Framed, under glass, hung spitted on the  
     wall.  
 . . . So, shuddering at the loathly cachin-  
     nation,  
 That shook the room, I reeled to outer air,  
 My brain that teemed with burning characters,  
 Wiped clean now to brute vacancy—per-  
     chance  
 For respite from the horrors. . . .

## CANTO II.—THE FLESH—TRIUMPH OF     BACCHUS

"Then I came  
 To a lit palace in a lordlier quarter  
 Of this great builded province, till it seemed  
 I, entering the vestibule, heard warbled  
 A song, as of a siren warbling low,  
 Who lulls, inhales, and breathes away the  
     soul.

### SIREN SONG

'Here are bowers  
 In halls of pleasure,  
 Flushed with flowers  
 For love or leisure;  
 Breathes no pain here,  
 Theirs nor yours,  
 All are fain here  
 Of honeyed hours;  
 Here in pleasure  
 Hide we pain,  
 None may measure,  
 Nor refrain;  
 Beauty blooming,  
 And flowing wine!  
 Yonder glooming,  
 Here Love-shine!  
 Breathes no pain here,  
 Theirs nor thine,  
 O remain here!  
 Low recline!  
 In Love's illuming  
 Woes all wane,  
 Of Beauty blooming  
 All are fain!  
 O remain here!  
 Lo! Love shining  
 After rain!'

"The air faints with aroma of sweet  
     flowers,  
 Marrying many-tendrilled labyrinths  
 Dew-diamonded, a harmony of hues;  
 And some are flushed like delicate fair flesh  
 Of smooth, soft texture; delicate love-organs  
 Impetalled hide, depend their fairy forms;  
 Ruffled corolla, pitcher, salver, cell,

Dim haunts of humming-bird, or velvet moth ;  
Doves pulsate with white wings, and make  
soft sound.

Such was the floral roof ; flowers overran  
In lovely riot ample, mounting pillars,  
Emergent from full bowers of greenery,  
Water and marble, lily, water-lily,  
Columns of alabaster, and soft stone,  
That hath the moon's name, alternating far  
Innumerable, feebly luminous.

A mellow chime dividing the lulled hours  
Embroiders them with fairy tone fourfold ;  
And we were soothed with ever-raining sound  
Of fountains flying in the warm, low light  
Of pendent lamp, wrought silver, gold, and  
gem,

Rich with adventure of immortal gods.  
Fair acolyte waved censer, whence the curled  
Perfume-cloud made the languid air one blue,  
And linen-robed priest on marble altar  
Made offering of fruit to Queen Astarte.

" Behind half-open broidery of bloom  
The eye won often glimpse of an alcove  
In floral bower, ceiled over with dim gold ;  
There velvet pile lay on the floor inlaid  
From looms of India, or Ispahan,  
With lace from Valenciennes, with silk or satin  
For coverlid ; they, with the downy pillow,  
Have tint of purple plums, or apricot,  
Of waning woods autumnal,  
Salvia, moth-fan, plume of orient bird.  
And here the storied walls luxuriant  
Are mellow-limned ; for lo ! Pompeianwise,  
All the young world feigned of a wanton joy  
Of Erôs, Io, Hebe, Ganymede,  
And all the poets tell of Aphrodite,  
Or her who lulled Ulysses in her isle,  
The idle lake, the garden of Armida,  
And more, what grave historian hath told  
Of Rosamund, Antinous, Cleopatra.  
Here forms of youthful loveliness recline,  
I know not whether only tinted marble,  
Or breathing amorous warm flesh and blood.

" Now from a grove of laurel and oleander,  
Plum, fragrant fig, vine, myrtle, fern, pome-  
granate,

Recalling Daphne, or Byblos, where the Queen  
Hath cave and fane anear the falling water,  
And where she wooed, won, tended her  
Adonis,

A masque of Beauty shone ; young Dionysus  
He seemed, the leader of the company,  
Who lolled in a chryselephantine car  
Upon a pillow's damson velvet pile ;  
An undulating form voluptuous,  
All one warm waved and breathing ivory,  
Aglow with male and female loveliness,  
The yellow panther fur worn negligent  
Fondling one shoulder ; stealthy-footed these  
That hale the chariot, one a lithe, large tiger,  
Blackbarred, and fulvous, eyed with furnace-  
flame,

A tawny lion one, his mane a jungle.  
The face was fair and beardless like a maid's,  
The soft waved hair vine-filleted ; he held  
Aloft with one white arm's rare symmetry  
A crystal brimmed with blood of grape that  
hath

Heart like a lucid carbuncle ; some fallen  
Over his form envermeiled more the rose  
Of ample bosom, and love-moulded flank ;  
The fir-coned thyrsus lying along the  
shoulder,

And listless fingered by a delicate hand,  
The languid eyes dim-dewy with desire.

" Some foam-fair, and some amber of deep  
tone

The company to rear of him, yet nigh,  
Fawn-youths and maidens robed in woven  
wind

Of that fine alien fabric, hiding only  
As lucid wave hides, or a vernal haze ;  
But some were rough and red, and rudely  
hewn,

Goat-shagged, satyric ; all high-held the vine,  
(Or quaffed it reeling), and the fir-cone rod ;  
The fairer filleted with violet,  
Anemone, or rose, Adonis-flower,  
The rude with wine, or ivy ; syrinx, flute,  
Sweetly they breathed into ; anon they pause,  
Till Dionysus, from his car descending,  
Tipsily leaned on one who may have been  
That swart and swollen comrade, old Silenus,

Fain to enfold the yielding and flushed form,  
Even as when the god wooed Ariadne;  
So one may see them on a vase, or gem.

"Then 'Io! Evoe!' broke from all:  
And from the band one whom I deemed a girl  
In guise of boyhood, like some Rosalind,  
Came with ahungred, lustrous eyes my way;  
The delicate neck, wave-bosom almond-hued  
Emerge from silk and swansdown; lucent  
hose

Cling to the ripe light limbs, and half disclose,  
Luxuriant lily with a wealth of charms  
Exuberant rending raiment of the sheath;  
The hair, a mist of gold, went minishing  
Adown the nape; thin shadowlined the dimple  
By vermeil cheek, and under shell-pink ear.

"She, folding a fair arm around me, fain,  
Lifts to my lips the ruby-mantling bowl,  
And her own mouth more crimson; then  
she draws

Within a shadowy nest near, an alcove  
For dalliance amorous, . . .

After enjoyment vanishing. . . . A change  
Was wrought in my surroundings; and there  
dawned

On me mine earlier love of southern summers,  
Fate-ravished from me . . . now she is  
another's!

A mellow, ripe, a peerless womanhood!

'Art thou then yielded to mine arms at  
length,'

I breathed, 'my Helen? Helen unto me,  
A purer, lovelier Helen, but another's!' . . .

"She fadeth, ere I hold-her . . . then the  
form

Of one I am bound to shield from all dis-  
honour

With spell of beauty dominant inflames,  
And paralyses reasonable will. . . .

"Now looked the mournful, dim, disordered  
face

Of wounded Love reproachful on the storm  
In my wild-heaving spirit, as the moon,  
Pale, from a cloud, upon a troubled sea:

And then, I seemed to see Love lying dead.  
The child, moreover, the dear child we lost  
Appeared in vision; but alas! the eyes,  
The eyes, more terrible than all, were turned  
Away from mine, and when they fronted me,  
They sought the ground; or, veiled with his  
dear hands,

I feared they wept: I know they met not  
mine! . . .

"Suddenly loud, harsh, dissonant peals of  
laughter

Startled and mocked me! . . . 'Thy delirium  
Conjured the vision, a mere wizard-wrought,  
Illusive phantasy! but now behold bare  
fact!' . . .

Lo! I am in the chill bleared street again:  
One spake—

'For you, Tannhäuser, who have seen the  
Christ,

Those earlier pleasure-houses are a ruin,  
Nor any of you may build them! Nay, for  
thee,

For thee in glamour of the Venusberg  
There hides no refuge from the modern woe!  
Wander abroad again! begone! nor linger!  
I flash my sword of cherubim before

The fair wall of earth's Eden, lest returning  
Ye take, and eat, and live content with earth.  
Ye may not quell your proud dissatisfaction,

Nor feed the hunger of a highborn soul  
With husk of sweet illusion like to these,  
Nor shut your heart from any bitter cry,  
Lapped in a luxury of degradation,  
Rendering indifferent to alien loss;  
Anon, even fearfully athirst for pain.

And if ye dally a moment, yet beware  
The unholy hell of ever-enduring fire,  
That endeth only, if it end, in death,  
The spell of Circe, and her transformation.

Yea, Beauty is a shadow from high Heaven;  
But emblem only, not substantial; hold not!  
O queenly soul, refuse to be a slave,

And drudge for Passion; fondle Beauty  
lightly;

Nor let her hold thee spinning with the  
women

Immured from the free air of stalwart deed,

From bracing airs of strong, heroic deed.  
But use her for thine own high ends, O  
queen,

Handmaiden, and not mistress ; for remember  
Beauty, who flattereth poor outer sense,  
Blinds often the eternal eye within !<sup>1</sup>

“ Yet am I fain to reconcile demands  
Both of the sense and spirit,” I replied.

“ And then some choir invisible was heard,  
Whose ode appeared responsive to the  
songs

A German, and an English poet made.

PAN<sup>1</sup>

‘ Pan is not dead, he lives for ever !  
Mere and mountain, forest, seas,  
Ocean, thunder, rippling river,  
All are living Presences ;  
Yea, though alien language sever,  
We hold communion with these !  
Hail ! ever young and fair Apollo !  
Large-hearted, earth-enrapturing Sun !  
Navigating night’s blue hollow,  
Cynthia, Artemis, O Moon,  
Lady Earth you meekly follow,  
Till your radiant race be run ;  
Pan is not dead !

‘ Earth, Cybele, the crowned with towers,  
Lion-haled, with many a breast,  
Mother-Earth, dispensing powers  
To every creature, doth invest  
With life and strength, engendering showers  
Health, wealth, beauty, or withholds ;  
Till at length she gently folds  
Every child, and lays to rest !  
Pan is not dead !

‘ Harken ! rhythmic ocean-thunder !  
Wind, wild anthem in the pines !  
When the lightning rends asunder  
Heavens, to open gleaming mines,  
Vasty tones with mountains under  
Talk where ashy cloud inclines . . .

<sup>1</sup> See Note I.

Over hoar brows of the heights ;  
Ware the swiftly flaming lights !  
Pan is not dead !

‘ Whence the “ innumerable laughter,”  
All the dancing, all the glees  
Of blithely buoyant billowed seas,  
If it be not a sweet wafture  
From joy of Oceanides ?  
Whence the dancing and the glees,  
In the boughs of woodland trees,  
When they clap their hands together,  
Hold up flowers in the warm weather ?  
Gentle elfins of the fur,  
Flowers, Venus’ stomacher,  
Grey doves who belong to her,  
Singing birds, or peeping bud,  
Lucid lives in limpid flood,  
Fishes, shells, a rainbow brood—  
If Pan be dead ?

‘ Naiads of the willowy water !  
Sylvans in the warbling wood !  
Oreads, many a mountain daughter  
Of the shadowy solitude !  
Whence the silence of green leaves,  
Where young zephyr only heaves  
Sighs in a luxurious mood,  
Or a delicate whisper fell  
From light lips of Ariel,  
If Pan be dead ?

‘ Wave illumined ocean palaces  
Musically waterpaven,  
Whose are walls enchased like chalices ;  
Gemmed with living gems, a haven  
For foamy, wandering emerald,  
Where the waterlights are called  
To mazy play upon the ceiling,  
Thrills of some delicious feeling !  
Sylph-like wonders here lie hid  
In dim dome of Nereid ;  
Tender-tinted, richly hued,  
Fair sea-flowers disclose their feelers  
With a pearly morn imbued,  
While to bather’s open lid  
Water fairies float, revealers  
Of all the marvels in the flood,  
And Pan not dead !

'We are nourished upon science ;  
 Will ye pay yourselves with words?  
 Gladly will we yield affiance  
 To what grand order she affords  
 For use, for wonder ; yet she knows  
 No whit whence all the vision flows !  
 Ah ! sister, brother, poets, ye  
 Thrill to a low minstrelsy  
 Never any worldling heard ;  
 Ye who cherish the password,  
 Allowing you, with babes, to go  
 Within the Presence-chamber so  
 Familiarly to meet your queen ;  
 For she is of your kith and kin !  
 Ye are like him of old who heard  
 In convent garden the white bird ;  
 A hundred years flew over him  
 Unheeding ! All the world was dim ;  
 At length, unknown, he homeward came  
 To brethren, now no more the same ;  
 Then, at evening of that day,  
 Two white birds heavenward flew away ;  
 Pan is not dead !

'Spirit only talks with spirit ;  
 Converse with the ordered whole,  
 However alien language blur it,  
 May only be of soul with soul.  
 In our image-moulding sense  
 We order varied influence  
 From the World-Intelligence ;  
 And if Nature feed our frame,  
 She may nourish pride or shame,  
 Holy, or unholy flame ;  
 Real forms the maniac sees,  
 Whom he cherisheth, or flees ;  
 Real souls the sleeper kens  
 In dreamland's eerie shadowed glens.  
 Pan is not dead !

'Every star and every planet  
 Feed the fire of Destiny ;  
 Or for good, or evil fan it,  
 Herè, Hermes, Hècate ;  
 By ruling bias, and career,  
 To all hath been assigned a sphere,  
 In realms invisible and here,

Obedience, administration  
 For individual or nation.  
 Ceres, Pluto, Proserpine  
 Are the years' youth, and decline,  
 Seasonable oil or wine,  
 Phantasmagory yours or mine ;  
 And if sense be fed by Nature,  
 With ne'er a show of usurpature  
 She may feed our spirit too,  
 And with hers our own imbue ;  
 Ruling influence from her,  
 Tallied with our character ;  
 Dionysus, Fauns may move  
 To revel, or the lower love,  
 Unrisen Ariel control,  
 Undine of yet unopened soul,  
 Fallen ghost invite to fall ;  
 Or She, who is the heart of all,  
 Uranian Aphrodite, whom  
 The world laid in a Syrian tomb  
 Under the name of Jesus, She  
 May dominate victoriously,  
 And Pan be dead !

'Whence are plague, fog, famine, fevers,  
 Blighting winds, and "weather harms" ?  
 Are sorceries malign the weavers,  
 Through inaudible ill charms ?  
 Disease, confusion, haunting sadness,  
 Lust, delirium, murder, madness,  
 Cyclone, grim earthquake, accident,  
 In some witch-cauldron brewed and blent ?  
 Now I see the open pit ;  
 Abaddon flameth forth from it !  
 Like lurid smoke the fiends are hurled  
 Abroad now to confound the world !  
 Disordered minds  
 Howl, shriek, wail in the wailing winds  
 Pan is not dead !

'Whence the gentle thought unbidden,  
 Resolve benign, heroic, just,  
 Lovely image of one hidden,  
 Higher cherished, lower chidden,  
 Self downtrodden in the dust ?  
 Silent hand of consolation  
 On the brows of our vexation,

On the burning brows of sorrow?  
 Much of all, be sure, we borrow  
 For that Profound of ours within,  
 From our holy kith and kin!

Pan is not dead!

'Warmth and light from shielding, sheeny  
 Wings of angels, or Athene,  
 Call the Guardian what you will,  
 Impelling, or consoling still!  
 While if to Christ, or Virgin mother,  
 Hate, greed, offer prayer, no other  
 Than Belial, Mammon, Ashtaroth  
 Draw nigh to hear, and answer both:  
 When lurid-eyed priest waves the cross  
 For slaughter, gain that is but loss  
 Demons contemptuously toss!  
 What though ye name the evil clan  
 Typhon, Satan, Ahriman,

Pan is not dead!

'Their bodies are the shows of nature,  
 Their spirits far withdrawn from ours;  
 We vary in our nomenclature  
 For the Demiurgic Powers,  
 To whom high duties are assigned  
 In our economy of mind,  
 As in our mortal order; they  
 Lead souls upon their endless way;  
 From whom the tender, sweet suggestion  
 Arrives uncalled, unheralded,  
 Illumination, haunting question,  
 Approval, blame from some one hid,  
 Perchance from one we count as dead;  
 Our eyes are holden; they are near,  
 Who oftentimes may see and hear!  
 By the auroral gate of birth,  
 In the youthful morning mirth,  
 At the portal of dim death  
 Their guardianship continueth;

Pan is not dead! . . .

'Ah! why then shrilled in the Ægean  
 The choral wail, the loud lament,  
 Confusion of the gods Idæan,  
 Dire defeat, and banishment,  
 When the lowly young Judæan  
 Dying head on cross had bent?

"Great Pan is dead!"

'Sun, and Moon, and Earth, and Stars,  
 Serene behind our cloudy bars,  
 With the Magi from the East,  
 Yield glad homage to the Least,  
 Offer myrrh, and gold, and gem  
 Before the Babe of Bethlehem,  
 Now Pan is dead!

'Yea, before the wondrous story  
 Of loving, self-surrendering Man  
 Paled the world's inferior glory,  
 Knelt the proud Olympian;  
 Then the darkness of the cross  
 Enthroned supreme Love's utter loss;  
 Then Ambition, Pride, and Lust  
 Into nether hell were thrust,  
 And Pan was dead!  
 The loveliness of Aphrodite  
 Waned before a lovelier far,  
 Fainting in the rays more mighty  
 Of the bright and Morning Star;  
 Lovely will to give and bless  
 Maketh form and feature less;  
 Young-eyed Erôs will sustain  
 His triumph, following in His train;  
 Kings conquered by One more Divine  
 In the courts imperial shine,  
 Thralls owing fealty to Him,  
 Who dying left their glory dim;  
 Feudatories, ranged in splendour,  
 Sworn high services to render,  
 With lions, leopards, fawning mild,  
 And drawn swords round a Little Child!

Pan, Pan is dead!

'For while the dawn expands, and heightens,  
 Greater gods arrive to reign,  
 Jupiter dethrones the Titans,  
 Osiris rules the world again,  
 But in a more majestic guise;  
 Sinai thunders not, nor lightens,  
 Eagle, sun-confronting eyes  
 Veils before mild mysteries!  
 Balder, Gautama, full-fain  
 Pay humble tribute while they wane;  
 All the earlier Beauty prone is  
 Before a lovelier than Adonis!  
 Till even the Person of our Lord,  
 In yonder daylight of the Spirit,

On all the people to be poured  
 By the dear influence of His merit,  
 Will fade in the full summer-shine  
 Of all grown Human, and Divine,  
 And every mode of worship fall,  
 Eternal God be all in all;  
 Pan lives, though dead !'

CANTO III.—THE ASCETIC LIFE—  
 DEVOTION—SPECULATION

"Then my dream, according to the custom of dreams, shifted utterly. Admiring, and half longing, I saw venerable collegiate buildings, with theological and philosophical libraries for learned seclusion, old-world cloister and decorous close, grey sculptured cathedral with antique tower, emblazoned pane, rolling organ, and impressive ritual—well indeed for devout and retiring souls ! Shall I stay here, I thought, and save mine, by mortification, contemplation, repentance, prayer ? Much have I to repent of, Heaven knows ! And I did cast myself down before an altar on the pavement of that church, bitterly remorseful for past sin ; hours and hours were spent in prayer, wrestling with the stifling coils of evil habit, inextricably entangled around heart and imagination, like the serpent around Laocoon, pleading with tears of blood for deliverance. Ah ! how often, how often had this been ! What mighty levers may be in prayer and praise, and chastened meditation ! What elevating influences for mankind may linger among these grand monuments of ancestral piety, art, and religious fervour ! Shall I fly from mankind, and turn monk ? But, even here, should I cease to burn ? Would Imagination release me, wrapped by her in a shirt of fire ? Grand, stern warrior-maid, Asceticism, not of this world art thou ! But evil dreams and restless longings would follow *me*, infirm of purpose, even here. Ah ! saintly maiden, Principalities and Powers from yonder may yet beat down your guard, confound, infect, and fire you with that worst riot of Imagi-

nation, or deaden with malign rigidity of spiritual pride !

"But, indeed, Church and World overlap, interpenetrate. In the world may you find the very breath and spirit, essential aroma of religion, devotion to God and man, though these may be named 'Ideal,' and 'Humanity,' or not named at all, only lived for ; while in the Church you may discover the World stretched out at full length, luxuriating in vain pomp and empty glory. A well-built tomb is the Church often, sprinkled decently with devoutness to make it smell sweet, slabbed imposingly with marbles of sound doctrine, correctly adjusted to one another.

"The Church ! no ! I can no longer submit myself to authority. Those venerable doctrines have become incredible to men and women who have tasted modern science and modern philosophy. Reason and Conscience reject them. We have outgrown the ancient creeds. I can never allow my private judgment to be subjugated by priest or book. I must find out for myself what is best adapted to nourish my own soul. The prescribed milk-diets administered by official ecclesiastical nurses I find no longer appropriate to my adult requirements.

"But here is the more secular college library ! There is here more than divinity, though divinity may help too. Let me stay here, and think, and read, till I find out for myself, if that may be, the riddle of the world ; or, in any case, what can be more delightful and absorbing than the search itself ? How exhilarating to climb the heights of speculation alone, and enjoy with rapture the ever-widening prospect therefrom disclosed ! How clear and serene the ether ! How calm and still these mountains of contemplation, aloof from the Earth-Babel of confused cries, vulgar care, base lust, fevered ambition ! Here would I abide, and think out for myself, helped, fortified, stimulated by ancient and contemporary wisdom, a comprehensive scheme of reason, in accord with recent discoveries, and yet satisfying

the higher, permanent wants and intuitions of our common nature. Then may I find also that solution which I so ardently desire for those terrible and oppressive moral difficulties, suggested by innocent and undeserved suffering, which, remaining unsolved, may even drive a sensitive soul to madness. Ah! how far more satisfying and delightful is such a life than any which sense can offer!

#### LYRIC OF THOUGHT

"I, who drained the bowl of pleasure,  
Satiated, in learned leisure,  
Here, at whatever cost,  
The bowl of knowledge would exhaust;  
Formidable barriers  
Will assault, surmount, disperse;  
The secret of the universe  
Will track home, in face of Powers,  
Sworn to guard their ancient Bowers,  
Wherefrom they rule this world of ours,  
From profane feet of intrusion,  
Overwhelm one with confusion,  
Who presumes to penetrate  
Where they hold their awful state,  
Sworn to hide from human sight,  
In the hollows of the night,  
The unimagined Council Hall,  
Whence they rule our earthly ball,  
Where Reason would confounded fall. . .  
Good? evil? neither? more than either?  
Night  
Involves him who demands more near,  
familiar sight! . . .

"Standards trailed in desert dust,  
Arms of mighty warrior rust;  
Amid their ruin I low lie,  
Staring foiled upon a sky  
Serene with azure mockery,  
While a witless idle air  
Whistles through the carcase there,  
Which was once a warrior fair!  
These corses to achieve the quest  
Burned once; now baffled here they rest!  
Yet my companion, more wise,  
Bows before dumb destinies,

Peers content upon the ground,  
Notes the soil, the pebbles round,  
Sets rare beetles in a row;  
'For these, at any rate, we know!  
Hunt eland, or the wild gazelle,  
Drink from palmy limpid well!  
Fruitless longing learn to quell!  
With a cordial smile advance  
To embrace your Ignorance!  
Warm, and comfortable here,  
Shed no vain, no foolish tear!  
Let this fair Capua beguile;  
Heed neither Rome, nor founts of Nile!  
So spake *Know-nothing*: but the  
Church;  
'Ware unaccredited research!  
The Lord commissioned me to dole  
Wholesome food for human soul;  
Thou, shameless Curiosity,  
Dare not irreverent to pry  
With dull, unpurged, earth-ailing eye!  
Lo! the appointed guardian  
Warns thee to retire, rash man!  
Heaven's thunderbolt shall cleave  
Who dare approach without my leave!  
I will save your soul from sinking  
With burdens of unchartered thinking.'  
Then some prophetic strain in air  
Confirmed the counsel of despair.  
'Pause, kneel, and know your natal bound;  
Yonder is holy ground!  
Sovran gods will only tell  
What heavenly wisdom deemeth well  
Weak man should know;  
Bend low!  
With madness they confound the man,  
Who will know more than mortal can!  
From them no intellect may wrest  
What they have locked within their  
breast;  
To lowly heart they will reveal  
All humble, holy heart may feel;  
You shall be patient, loving, mild,  
Become once more a little child.  
Let him who fain would learn lie still,  
Inquire, and do, the Holy Will.  
The arrogant, hard, reasoning mind  
Darkling gropeth, bare and blind!

The chariot and horseman lie whelmed  
 beneath the wave,  
 Multitudinous night of Pharaoh, he who  
 proudly drave,  
 With music and with banner, rich robed in  
 morning's beam,  
 Exulting in their youth and strength, they  
 feed the ocean stream!  
 The pomp and glory of their arms wide  
 welter on the sea,  
 Spent foam, sere leaf, the tempest-torrent  
 whirls imperiously!

"But I, unwarned, peered wistfully afar,  
 Over dim realms of mystery that are  
 Never to be explored by mortal feet,  
 Nor ceased with passionate crying to  
 entreat,

'Unveil, O Isis! loosen the cloud-fold,  
 Even though thy visage bring me the  
 death-cold!'

Ah! woe for whom, brain-giddy, in  
 fascinate,

The Abysmal, and impassive face of  
 Fate,

All-gendering Mother of devouring Law,  
 Unveileth, who may tell not what he  
 saw!

He stammers, dazed, unheeding stupefied  
 Our wonted world, and habit, haggard-  
 eyed. . . .

Did he behold, flashed forth in lurid  
 light,

Thronged lives of all swept o'er the abyss  
 of night?

No climber dares to face the gulf around;  
 Regards the rock-wall and the solid  
 ground!

And yet, as one who tastes the drowsy  
 herb,

That doth imagination's flight perturb,  
 Craves evermore, so fierce desire to  
 know

Burns fiercer, and condemns the ver-  
 tigo. . . .

Then the cathedral bell began to toll;  
 And whelming waters boomed above my  
 soul.

## BOOK IV.—DISORDER

### PROSE INTERLUDE—THE WORLD; OR, THE NEW WALPURGIS NIGHT

#### THE WORLD IN THE CHURCH

"AND NOW I caught a glimpse of one who, from his hyper-ecclesiastical deportment, preternatural gravity, and gaitered legs, I judged to be a bishop. He, stiff, stately, and demure (with butler still more stiff, stately, and demure behind his chair), sat dining in a luxurious room of his episcopal palace, eating pheasant and sipping claret, while reflecting that his wine-merchants had certainly not supplied him with the same brand as before; next, that the rector of B— had not shown quite the full share of respect due to episcopal dignity, while latterly he had, from all accounts, shown a lamentable leaning towards the Sabellian heresy. ['By the way, how very shabby his coat looked! But the poor man has a parish of 10,000 souls, I believe, besides a wife and family—I don't know how many—and about £50 a year to keep them on! Jones'—to the butler—'just fetch me Crockford!—this claret isn't Lafitte at all, Jones.' (*Jones*—'Isn't it, my lord? Yes, my lord.') 'I'll just see what the poor man has.'] Afterwards, his lordship's thoughts reverted to the late imprudent sale of a next presentation in which he was interested; then to the dangerous encroachments of modern democracy in general, but of Nonconformity as regards disestablishment and disendowment in particular; lastly, to certain new-fangled, impracticable, and rather indecorous notions put forward by some latitudinarian brethren, concerning equalisation of clerical incomes, and curtailment of episcopal prerogative.

"The World in the Church! And ah! what profitless turning ever in the same closed circle of ideas! What weariness in abstract thought! and mere pretentious emptiness in books! It's but the stone of Sisyphus! I own that my high enterprise

has suffered defeat! Let me seek contact with life again; touching my native earth, I may renew my strength; disillusioned, may become even reconciled to the world. In any case, among men and women only may theory be tested and verified. I may hear, too, at first hand, what our latest thinkers and social reformers have to teach,—learn yonder what I could not discover in solitude—some solution of modern problems, some true panacea for the ills that afflict mankind.

“So from that hushed atmosphere of the Past, from those umbrageous elms and recumbent effigies of departed worth, from yonder oriel-windowed library of meditative seclusion, haunted silently by ardent thoughts of innumerable minds, thoughts that radiate from the printed page when one takes a volume, brown-bound, fragrant, fading, from amongst its fellows on the shelves, I found myself hurried once more to modern city and crowded street.—Over the mighty modern river, along whose banks roars Labour, myriad-armed, myriad-tongued; athwart whose vast bridges, traffic-thronged, thunders the lit train, whose cloudy breathing is fitfully illuminate; while under their huge arches, and betwixt their Titan piers, dividing the massy flood, swift, turbid, gurgling, corrugated, throb steamers laden with merchandise of all lands, and eager human faces—to the city of wharf, warehouse, dome, steeple, superb palace, and modern school, slum, hovel, court, alley, and street, loud with hubbub of wheels, glad song of children, call of itinerant vendor, drunken oath, filthy jest, maddened blow, shriek of pain!

#### THE PALACE OF ART

“In a wide and well-built thoroughfare of this colossal city I noted how pompous Sir Capital stalked majestic, save for occasional twinges of the gout, or a tight boot; but away from him I was transported to a chamber in a somewhat secluded square, where I beheld Wordsworths Schmetterling, an ‘æsthete’ of prosperous and not ill-

favoured countenance, composed to becoming melancholy, reclined at ease, inhaling a perfumed narghileh, pastured upon sentiment, ruminating airy fancies, and spinning his little cocoon of versicles, wherein to hide himself from the vulgarity and vexation of this everyday world. ‘Religion, philosophy, social questions, and politics are a troubled element for art,’ sighed this Goetheling, after Goethe. And, accordingly, the poet had hung himself up (metaphorically speaking, of course) in the quiet greenwood of a deserted London square, inhabiting his little Paradise of dainty devices; but whether a seasonable change to winged activity would ever happen to him, I knew not; for look where, with sinister smile, on the foot-pavement below, prowls a too conscientious friend, and literary rival, seeking whom he may devour in his next article, smacking his lips over the prospect of how completely his pure critical taste will constrain him to demolish his quondam ally’s little cocoon, and make a hearty meal of the contents! But the pretty chrysalis, for the nonce, remaining happily unconscious of this malign vicinity, could achieve his delicate verbal effects in comparative peace. These were really felicitous curiosities in their way. And has not an indubitable poet justified the grammarian for his life-long solicitude about *ὄτι* and the enclitic *δε*? At one’s leisure these things may help to kill time agreeably, and they show dexterity. For me, I look, wonder, and pass.

“‘Art,’ said Schmetterling, talking to an acquaintance, who had now entered, ‘has but to lisp nothings prettily, with a foreign accent, if possible, only taking care that they be nothings. Let her, above all, beware the pestilent heresy of supposing—though, as you say, people like Æschylus, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Lucretius, Dante, Milton, Shelley, Dryden, Wordsworth, may have supposed—that Art has a “mission”!—a mission to enlighten, fortify, or console. Nay, if she forget to be a trifle, a plaything, she ceases, *ipso facto*, to be Art.’ ‘Per-

haps,' suggested his acquaintance profanely, 'you and your school may have a natural incapacity for, and therefore antipathy to, serious thought, and this may explain your attitude.' 'On the contrary!' he replied. 'In fact, when I was a boy, metaphysics were my favourite study. But I went through, and exhausted all the philosophies long ago, and found they had little to teach me that I didn't know already—squeezed them dry—mere pedantry, and empty phrases!' Here he took a new pose, and blew a cloud of smoke. 'Besides,' he added, 'the commonplace is alone capable of wearing our precious adornments gracefully. In fact, what we want is a lay figure to show off the pretty dresses we make for it—the less animation the better. And then there is nothing new to say! The world is very old; all has been said; there is nothing very remarkable left for us to talk about now. One is disenchanted—*blasé*, you know—*ennuyé*. Indeed, great poets never really feel what they affect to feel—though, of course, one must *simulate* feeling effectively. Now, for instance, I have written some admired poems about the sea. But I simply detest the sea! It makes me ill even to go from Dover to Calais, you know—what? Oh yes! my enemies say I have nothing but the gift of the musical gab, and am all phrases. But, then, they are Philistines. Who is fool enough to take a poet *au grand sérieux*? But to turn a sentence or period cleverly is surely the highest of human functions. Style, sir, style!—the one thing needful is style. No matter what you say, so long as you say it nicely. It's rather a pity to have a big subject. That is apt to be unwieldy. Doesn't it show more "genius" to make one up for yourself, out of nothing at all—or very little? However, if you can make a good thing out of any subject, whatever it may be, in God's—or the Devil's—name take it! A good thing, of course, I mean, artistically speaking. What? Oh yes; pudding and praise too will come by my

method, plenty of them! The slums, and the poor people! Oh, fie! those can never be nice subjects, I should say! But the nuances of subtle sentiment in refined persons and artists—the delicate tint and tone, shine and shadow of sensuous desire! only be sure to look at any subject as a *subject*'—('Providentially provided for you to make poems out of,' added the friend)—'whether it be the last earthquake, the plague, the story of a hero, a royal marriage, or what not.' ('Just as cork-trees were made to stop our ginger-beer bottles.') 'Art,' resumed the poet, disdaining to notice this, 'is always more than nature. What you have to do is to adorn and polish her raw hard-grained rusticity.' 'Dear me!' said the friend; 'I always fancied you poets were lifted up by your subject, and penetrated by it, carried out of yourselves, inevitably, as by a kind of whirlwind, to lofty regions of artistic creation.' 'Oh, that's quite exploded,' replied Schmetterling; 'just the contrary! You must reduce the big subject to your level—I mean, of course, elevate it to your level.' ('Patronise it, in short,' interrupted the other.) 'No, but ours is the imaginative faculty, so much higher than crude nature.' 'You must look at a thing through the reverse end of your telescope, I suppose, rather than use that to interpret it by,' put in the Philistine. 'Well, then, it seems that the great events and tragedies of the world exist only in order to provide you fellows with the opportunity for illustrating the momentous distinction between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, trilled and quavered in dulcet numbers, as it were, by trained *ephebi* of ecclesiastical Rome. A great tragic event, a great public or private sorrow, is only so far important (in your eyes) as you may be able to tame or train it into a sort of circus horse, to show off its paces, and by caracoling display your skill and grace in equestrian feats of the literary *manège* before a gaping circle of intimates. In itself it is not of more or less moment than a mere passing whim or sensa-

tion of yourself, or of Jones, which may equally be elaborated into pyrotechnics of sensational and novel linguistic effect. You would "peep and botanise upon a mother's grave," nay, make a dead relation pose for you in becoming attitudes. You leave out the morally beautiful and ugly, the intellectually satisfying, the higher proportion and loveliness pertaining to spirit, involving contrast between good and evil—that which is highest in man—only admitting the æsthetically or sensuously pleasing. With you, providing only you "rhyme and rattle, all is well." Poetry, according to your school, would seem to be the voluble, and more or less melodious gabble of a parrot, superadded to the posture-making and attitudinising of a monkey, or the airs and graces of a courtesan. But the art has not been so understood by its great masters—by Homer, Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe, Hugo, Byron, the Brownings, or Tennyson. Well, good-bye.' 'What a Philistine,' muttered Schmetterling, as he left. 'Knows as much of poetry and art as my shoe!'

"It was said, I hardly know with how much truth, that Schmetterling had deserted the wife whom (having one eye always pretty wide open on the main chance) he had married, because, though she was an excellent, domestic, affectionate soul, and devoted mother, doing a great deal of good in the world, she wasn't a '*genius*,' as he and his intimates fondly supposed themselves to be—that is, didn't sufficiently appreciate the 'precious' verbal confections which gave some people the idea of a very highly ornamented wedding-cake, and didn't care for the *feux d'artifice*, or dodges of contorted diction. At any rate, he gave himself the airs of a coxcomb with, and made himself offensive to, many good, plain, straightforward people, of far more essential and solid consequence to mankind than himself, justifying his ignoble and fretful selfishness on the implicit, if not avowed plea, that such persons were not in his own private line of linguistic confectionery and whipped syllabub,

but produced things less ethereal, or, as some horrid Philistines unkindly put it, 'more solid and nutritious, less windy, salacious, and indigestible.' But can anything more utterly provincial and ridiculous than such an attitude be conceived? A true poet must first of all be true man or woman. Imagine a Walter Scott with all this deportment and affectation of a literary Turveydrop, *petit maitre*, or flunkey—Walter Scott, who respected and made friends of so-called 'ordinary' folk; of politicians, and those engaged in the various professions; of workmen, tradesmen, dairymaids—knowing that if they might learn something from him, he, in his turn, had many things to learn from them, and they their indispensable function, like himself.

'One bore his head above the rest,  
As if the world were dispossessed. . . .  
With measured step, and sorted smile . . .  
Some trod out stealthily and slow,  
As if the sun would fall in snow  
If they walked to instead of fro.  
And some with conscious ambling free  
Did shake their bells right daintily,  
On hand and foot for harmony.'

So sang a great poet, and true woman, by the grace of God born in the purple, and crowned, in scorn of all pretenders.

"Then I, leaving this little Art-palace of the verbal epicure, as finding less satisfaction here than in Church, library, or temple of pleasure—no help for the solution of problems that oppressed me, or consolation for world-sorrow—passed again into the street, noting on the pavement a work of ingenuity, made by a poor mechanic suffering from severe illness, that interested me almost more even than the felicitous curiosities within—though I did admire these, too, in their kind and in their degree. Only the manufacturers set such an inordinate value on their cobweb fabrics, their toys of musical wordmongery. This was a small wooden house, in which pith dolls were made to open windows and

walk out of the doors when you dropped a penny into a slit made in the structure—really a very ingenious contrivance.

"Well, one mustn't break a butterfly upon a wheel, nor put one's stick into a wasp's nest! However, I wandered along the highway again, murmuring to myself with another great poet, 'Divine philosophy is not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose, But musical as is Apollo's lute.'

#### GOOD SOCIETY

"Along an ample-mansioned street there approached now a well-appointed carriage with coachman and livery servant, in which were seated four persons of the first fashion—a man and woman of mature years, with two daughters, all fairly well-born, well-dressed, well-looking, negative people, not remarkable even for decorous indolence, that being so very common in their class. They wore an air of serene satisfaction with themselves and their belongings, tempered, however, by one of boredom, and relieved now and again by a look of half-ironical patronage, half-assumed unconsciousness, varied by a more pronounced and vulgarly insolent contempt in presence of those whom they were pleased to regard as their inferiors—persons, however, who often enough might be as verily superior to them as they were to the excremental dust under the hoofs of their horses; for while their embryos had evidently not been arrested at the tadpole stage (through which, as we are told, all our embryos must inevitably pass) their souls had apparently remained behind somewhere about there, probably finding it too much trouble to go any further. These repose on the accomplished fact and established custom as comfortably as their bodies on the carriage cushions, since in their case the accomplished fact happens to turn uppermost for their convenience a general lounge quite as downy and luxurious, a soft agreeable surface of exceptional good fortune; there, indeed, they repose, as though that were the very

foundation of Kosmic order, unquestionably a fit, proper, and eternally secure. Now, if this lounge should happen to have a seamy side turned down toward less favoured mortals underneath, and if these should have to make themselves as comfortable as possible under the circumstances in the obscurity of the nether parts—nay, should the human figures supporting the chair of state in which such persons pose prove no carved effigies in wood and stone, but a sort of living caryatides, rather—slaves, with the life-long contortion of limb and feature, the habitual corrugation of brow belonging to want, anxiety, and pain—as it were, perpetual bearers, sweating and agonised, on struggling shoulders, of emblazoned coffins containing so much dead weight of obstruction, royal, noble, or merely fox-facultied and moneyed,—why, such great folk do not often condescend to look so low; and were their attention drawn to the circumstance, they might show plainly by their head-in-air deportment that they judged such an allusion indecorous and underbred in a modern drawing-room; yet, should they prove equal to making a remark—which is improbable—it might be to this effect: that Providence having exclusive charge of all the arrangements, to question their propriety must be in singularly bad taste, not to say revolutionary and profane. 'The poor ye have always with you,' quoted one of the ladies on some such occasion, listlessly buttoning the fourth button of her long kid glove.

"The existing order had the stolid support of these fine folk, partly because their minds were too sluggish readily to imagine any other, partly because the present system was entirely favourable to musty privilege. They were orthodox and conservative in religious dogma also, so far as they were capable of comprehending it; indeed, the less they understood, the more acquiescent were they ('We mustn't presume to question,' &c.)—if you put a dummy in a corner, it won't move; it is a good Conservative, though rather deficient in private initiative. This species

of people, to adopt a phrase from the biology of polyps, has a *colonial*, rather than an individual consciousness—or, like Wordsworth's cloud, they 'move all together if they move at all.' (That 'colonial' life is rather fine in its way, simulating and foreshadowing altruism at the opposite, inferior, and protoplasmic pole of the life cycle.) Church and State, however, keep the people in their place, and it must be well to keep one's self in good odour with the higher Powers by paying them proper deference in the orthodox way—the only way which, one has always understood, has their special authorisation and approval; it must be as proper for us to touch our hats to them as for the lower classes to do it to us.

"The eldest daughter, now seated in this carriage, was about to marry a rich person of dubious reputation—with her eyes open; the younger was affianced to an old 'hereditary legislator' of notoriously bad life—with her eyes shut. And I thought to myself—After all, are these children better off than the murdered ones yonder, even than those who are sold by their poor parents to a life of shame, or kidnapped by mercenary wretches for purposes of prostitution?

"The carriage stopped before a large shop with expensive jewellery displayed behind plate-glass, and here the party alighted, being met and accompanied into the place by a young gentleman with an eye-glass, of similarly immaculate exterior and similarly inane cast of countenance—which, however, was not ill-adapted to assume a set stare of arrogant inquiry when any one out of his own set obtruded his presence or conversation. But there came to the carriage door a young woman of less immaculate exterior, the flush of strong drink, rouge, and consumption on her faded and haggard countenance, once beautiful, with a cough, and torn habiliments of tawdry finery, murmuring some hoarse request. She had once been a needlewoman; but making shirts at a penny a shirt is scarcely remunerative employment, while sitting stitching at them all day and half the

night is a little trying to health; so that latterly she had preferred the streets. A policeman now told her to move on. One of the ladies, however, while proceeding from the carriage door to the shop under the shelter of the flunkey's big umbrella—for it was beginning to rain—ordered him to give her a penny, and passed in.

#### RESPECTABILITY—"GETTING ON"

"Next in my dream it came to pass that all these distinguished persons seemed suddenly to be assembled together, and to recognise me. They all came up simultaneously—bishop, æsthetic reviewer, elderly peer (of juvenile creation)—and, with more effusion than I should have given them credit for, competed there and then for the pleasure of entertaining me. This made me regret the rather cynical point of view from which I had regarded them, and induced me to revise my verdict. I began to think I had done them some injustice, and to reflect that they were probably not bad fellows after all. I am not quite sure now whose invitation it was I accepted; but I rather think it was the distinguished reviewer's (Mr. Worldly-wiseman's), for I know I was consumedly anxious as to what he might say about my next book—yes, it was, for I remember that after disparaging the various nostrums advertised for human ills, he proceeded to advocate increased and more organised authority for journalism. He was a well-dressed man, with a somewhat supercilious air of serene superiority—an air of habitual minimising, or depreciation—and an Oxford drawl. Like another sage, Socrates, he only knew that he knew nothing, but was evidently well contented with himself for knowing that much. His agnosticism appeared to agree with him; for he was sleek, gentlemanlike and flourishing. As for his bitterness, that was his trade, and he had been a little sour from the cradle upwards. But he made it pay, and thanked the Unknowable that he was not as other men are—nor even as yonder poor 'dogmatist.'

"I found myself in a pillared hall of fine proportions, with wide balustraded staircase, then in a sumptuous dining-room, full of tables, about which waiters hurried, carrying many kinds of food. We dined—an excellent *menu*—and soon, in the luxurious, soft-carpeted smoking-room, I reclined in an arm-chair, sipping coffee, feeling that, after all, the actual order of things was not so very unsatisfactory—at least for me, who belonged to the privileged classes.

"What I really want (I avowed to myself in my present mood, and *sotto voce*) is to dominate, and know that I dominate; I want power, homage, and a great name. Social position is well, but by cultivation of natural gifts I will improve upon the advantage given by accident. Why not? The old name shall be illustrious; men shall bow down to me, and for this end I will adapt myself to their humours, study their predilections, gratify them by supplying what they happen to demand, trim my sails to the breath of popular applause, flattering the taste of the hour, powerful advocate of fashionable beliefs, or the shibboleths of some influential party. Much is to be said on every side, and I shall be half persuaded myself. My own ruling impulse shall be ridden with a curb; I will renounce, so far as may be, favourite studies, cherished ideals, if these are not likely to bring me speedy profit, praise, and an honoured name, being altogether outside the trend, sympathy, and comprehension of the common herd, cultivated or otherwise. Those wide gaping mouths of the many heads (which are mostly mouth) shall be supplied with the suitable pabulum. (What they may like or want at a given moment, indeed, may be almost as incalculable as the whims of a gust, that blows now one straw, and now another about the street!) Nor will I cherish my inmost private conviction, misgiving, or foreboding too conscientiously. Indeed, much must be sacrificed to party; great advances are only made by stern repression of idiosyncrasies and crotchets. Besides,

some dirty work must be done; there must be some noise and friction of the machinery. One must live! Early ideals, like final causes, and vestal virgins, are apt to be barren. (Here the dissonant aerial chuckles became particularly harsh and loud.)

"These comfortable, though not too moral and original reflections, were meanwhile receiving reinforcement from the discourse of my host, which, though getting rather sleepy, I listened to with some edification and complacency—until, at least, he forgot the expediency, to use a slang phrase, of 'drawing it mild.' I can't recollect all he said, but amongst many wise things I recall these: He argued that philanthropy did more harm than good, because of its fanatical unwisdom. He showed incontrovertibly how much more mischief than benefit in the long-run well-meant remedies for popular grievances had invariably produced, since nature has so framed us that we *must* necessarily love ourselves and hate our neighbour. Philanthropists are merely meddling Pharisees, who set up to be better than their neighbours, and want to curtail individual liberty—an Englishman's house being his castle, &c. Are you going to pull down firmly-rooted abuses in a moment? No, nor in a lifetime! They are tough, and take a deal of chopping. Don't fuss! What's the use? Besides, they are but symptoms of an ineradicable disease; subdue them, and they will break out elsewhere, in some other shape. So my friend Worldlywiseman observed, repressing a yawn, letting fall, at the same time, the long ash from his cigar, and ruminating his superfine article for next Saturday. In this style he now proceeded to expound 'the dismal science,' which may also, from another aspect of it, be named 'the comfortable creed,' till I thought he became rather dull, and only assented lazily, not half hearing, or caring to understand. I began to feel, indeed, that this kind of conventional

acquiescence in the actual, however low and unrighteous, could hardly satisfy one long; then, too, I was a Bohemian by nature, and that had a good deal to do with it! Pleading the heat of the room, I went forth to breathe the air, and when I returned found, to my great relief, that mine host had gone to sleep. All through this conversation I had heard the low aerial voices chuckling. Quite as distinctly I heard them now as ever I had done in East-end slum, murderous country grange, or episcopal library; then one whispered very audibly, as though to parody the really sensible remarks of my entertainer, 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

"Was I a madman, or a 'medium,' a sort of magician, like my prototype, Dr. Faustus, who in the Middle Ages sold his soul to the devil for the sake of power, enjoyment, and occult, 'God-forbidden' lore—knowledge of what the spirit in man so ineradicably, if profanely, aspires to know? Certainly, I *seemed* to hold intercourse with spirits, good and bad, who spoke to me and influenced me for good and evil. But then the majority of scientists have pronounced that 'mediums' are frauds and conjurers, when they are not victims of hallucination. And scientists surely must have exhausted all the evidence obtainable, both by personal investigation of these phenomena as they appear to occur in our own day, and by careful study of contemporary, as well as former testimony to their actuality. Yet, after all, is it possible that they have not paid sufficient attention to such things, since not a few very eminent men of science have pronounced the phenomena to be genuine? But far indeed be it from me to assert them genuine! for do not the majority of popular newspapers devote columns now and again to laughing at them? And the infallibility of newspapers, who would be presumptuous enough to question, even if one disbelieved in the Pope's? Why, they would review you unfavourably, or not at all! One would not even dare to whisper, 'E pur se muove!'—if it was a question of *tables*.

#### BABEL, AND WILL-O'-THE-WISP

"Alas! I know too well that I shall be set down as a 'lunatic' anent these same 'voices'! There is no more certain note of 'lunacy' than hearing them, modern doctors tell us.

"A conversation going on in another part of the room had reference to kindred topics. Somebody was remarking how completely exploded for good and all is that old superstition about the inspiration of the Bible, or other sacred writings. He was demonstrating (by help of the marvellous illumination of modern science) how this kind of thing—namely, Bible-writing and miracles—is 'done': it's partly honest delusion of silly people, and partly pious fraud, clever conjuring which has managed to impose itself on gaping ignorance, or barbaric simplicity, as supernatural. For we now so perfectly comprehend *all* the laws of nature, and know so certainly that all must happen through one or other of the laws with which we are already familiar! And perhaps wisdom will die with us. For do not there seem (if that indeed be possible in so enlightened an age!) to be some ugly symptoms of a recrudescence of superstition in the shape of table-turning and spiritism? But ours, alas! *may* be only a thin slice of sound, substantial scepticism, nutritive and consoling, sandwiched in between two huge interminable hunches of windy, unwholesome superstition, euphoni-ously christened 'Faith.' Ah! those long dark ages, that have only just ceased for our poor humanity, and may yet recommence!—why, there was that poor old Pagan fool, Socrates—almost as bad as a Christian!—with his 'demon,' and his maundering chatter about 'the Good,' 'the Beautiful,' 'the True,' and the immortality of the soul! The mere mention in his hearing of the 'Demon,' and the 'Voices,' would have been enough to show our great Dr. M— what was the matter with *him*—how seriously the cortical tracts—the grey matter, or the white (these are the only true 'white spirits and

grey' of the old song!—had gone astray in the upper storey of that ugly, prophetic skull: And then the poor old fellow need only have been clapped into a comfortable asylum (conducted on the benevolent modern system)—need not have been requested to swallow that poison! But ah! great Dr. M—— was yet unborn, nor was anything then known about the *hippocampus minor*; such knowledge being reserved for our own favoured times (that 'they without us should not be made perfect,' I suppose)—for this illuminated age of universal and exhaustive knowledge—(tempered, indeed, it occurred to me, by simultaneous professions of general ignorance, and supreme despair!). Seers, prophets, and reformers, forsooth! At last we have found out what to do with *them*! Send them to some celebrated mad-doctor; on no account stone, or burn them! That's but a crude way of hurting, and getting rid of them, with their disagreeable ways. It isn't their 'cussedness,' as the world once supposed; it's only their hippocampus a little out of order! Put them in a strait-waistcoat, and take no more notice! Let 'the wind blow where it listeth!' For we have found out that it is *only* wind; therefore let us be joyful!—'the spirit does but mean the breath.' After all, one reflected, this is only a learned and more scientific adoption and adaptation of the vulgar herd's normal and natural attitude in presence of genius, its heaven-accredited ruler and guide—a more elaborate and instructed way of kicking against the pricks. Cassandra, what sayest thou? Paul, what did a certain Festus think of thee? And what, at a later date, was the doom of Tasso? But in those days they supposed that

'The dog, to gain his private ends,  
Went mad and bit the man;'

and so he got uncommonly short shrift. Though whether 'Crucify, crucify!' or 'Shut him up as a lunatic!' be the more agreeable cry to hear, we may leave to the prophet

whom we are hounding to determine. However, whether, again, these, or the multitude that bellows after them, thirsting for blood, be the more insane, some of us may feel disposed to apply 'here with modification the words, 'Heu! quanto minus reliquis versari quam tui meminisse!'' And it must be admitted that these insane folk have given the world a few powerful onward shoves, in spite, if not on account, of their insanity! Unless, indeed, it was only some strangely inexplicable thought-dominating spell, cast upon mankind everywhere and always by a crafty (though rather dull and stupid) priesthood, who, in their own interests, got them to believe those obvious fables about God, human personality, and an after-life for retribution or compensation, equitable conclusion, and explication of the inequalities in earthly lots. Absurd and immoral ideas, which, left to their own unsophisticated reason and conscience, men would so unhesitatingly have rejected! Strange, almost miraculous influence of a by no means exceptionally gifted, but very average class of persons all over the world! But the present life has lately been discovered to be so eminently satisfactory to all concerned—especially to the majority of poor toilers, clothed in hodden grey, besmirched with grime of want and vice, blood and tears, whose children call to them day and night for food which they cannot provide, till over and over again they resolve to end it all for themselves and those dear to them by friendly knife or poison—that it is manifestly puerile and superfluous to concern one's self about any other. And if there be still something wanting to our earthly paradise, can we not secure the millennium to-morrow by incontinently dividing the accumulated earnings of a clever and industrious few among the idle and incompetent many, so that all may have a very little, if not quite enough? Is it obvious, indeed, that, natural abilities and moral virtues not being so easily divisible, the result and outcome of this forcible and eminently righteous distribution will not

be the same inequality to-morrow morning? But, of course, we must grease our new social machine with a little human fat, so as to make it move more easily, painting it gaily also with a little gore. We shall have to slit a few gullets. But blood-letting in the civil organism is a healthy process of depletion, which you can notoriously arrest just at the precise amount and period your own judicious and humane fancy may happen to suggest. It's as simple as putting warm water into a bath; you have only to turn your private tap, and the red stream ceases flowing. The temperature of social strife, moreover, for all the world like that of a warm bath, can so easily be regulated by your own little thermometer. Past experience proves it, blood feuds and wars of revenge being unheard of in Europe, or elsewhere.

"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth' is doubtless an exploded principle, only known to the ancient Jews. Those age-long degradations of insolent contumely, repression, neglect, and inhuman persecution that characterised feudal Europe were doubtless as little responsible for the frenzied orgy of cruel and general murder that marked the first French Revolution, as were the massacre of priests and hostages and the burning of their own fair city by the Paris Commune for those retaliatory excesses of the White Terror. Nay, but the ineffable horde of barbarous roughs, tricoteuses, and petroleuses, which our so-called 'civilisation' considerably nurses in the Pandemonium of her huge cities, and disembogues on festive or anti-festive occasions, are precisely what our ever-enduring criminal and callous stupidity has carefully contrived and provided for world-confusion. And will they not destroy us, as those outer barbarians destroyed Rome?

"Ah! no—slowly and tentatively, founding themselves on experience, patiently, with mutual sympathy, justice, kindness, let our fresh-leaving institutions grow in the free illuminated air of wise and virtuous convic-

tion, branching and burgeoning out of the old primal root of Divine and Human Veneration, out of the ancient order, until there rise, in the course of ages, as to a hidden music, nobly proportioned, the City of God!

"Thus spake one dissenting from the glib and sinister, though plausible, panaceas so airily propounded, and continued—

"Alas! though men inherit the vices, how seldom do they profit by the experience of their forefathers! One would think, to hear some talk, that we were all back early in the last century, in full Floréal, offering votive flowers of our fraternity upon the ancient altars, and fervently embracing one another, when Hope was yet young, and the weary peoples were turning eager eyes toward that daydawn of Liberty, so soon, alas! to be extinguished. lurid and cloud-mantled, setting in seas of blood; one would suppose that the frowning Bastilles of hoar Tyranny had but now fallen amid the glad triumphant pæans of emancipated Humanity—ere Revolution, agape for more victims, like any Tiberius, or Commodus, like any De Sade, De Retz, or Catherine de Medici of the old *régime*—after spawning Marat, Hebert, Fouquier-Tinville, and the 'Seagreen Incorruptible,' born with hands clutching one another's throats, mad with mutual hatred, suspicion, and envy—had devoured her own evil brood, and organised civil society, reverting to primal chaos, the ever-unfortunate People, hoodwinked as usual, betrayed by knaves and fools, uncrowned and undecorated this time, starved again as heretofore—until the inevitable Despot arose to stamp with mailed heel upon the Hydra, chaos-clamouring, blood-gorged. No! bloodshed, revolution, and violent overturning are but a poor remedy—save in countries where no constitutional, no public cry can make itself heard in the general night, but all is stifled by the moral murderer. Yet blandly or sullenly do sanguinary fanatics, cynical, self-seeking, untaught and unteachable, propose to us, of the later Nineteenth Century, the same old

seesaw of civil fury and mutual slaughter, as supreme panacea for all wrong, supreme satisfaction for all want! What! Have we of later time never gazed, then, into the pit of massacre at Avignon, in that accursed Palace of Popes, with 'citizens' who made their brutal jest upon the lingering agonies of men, women, and children, writhing and moaning there, a confused dim heap in the horrible darkness? never seen the drunken Septemberers hacking blunderingly at defenceless victims, whetting their newly acquired, unnatural appetite for blood and torture in those paven courts and dungeons of Paris Prison? never heard the sinister roll of tumbrils, laden with their matutinal human food for Death? beheld refined and gentle women, friends of man, insulted and torn to pieces by a 'fraternal' mob of 'sisters,' 'brothers'? or an amiable child done to death by them, only because he happened to be born royal? Ah! sweet and lovable human nature! As Byron says—

'Religion, virtue, freedom, what you will,  
A word's enough to rouse mankind to kill!'

"The note of this new panacea for all our woe seems to be—Eliminate the head for the benefit of the hands; let the former perish of atrophy, that the latter may be well nourished. It is an old-fashioned notion that the head is wanted to cater for the hands. This was concisely put by a sansculotte Caliban at a public meeting recently, when he howled, 'After all, Shakespeare was a b——y blood-sucker, for *he* never made so much as a pair of shoes!' Perhaps under the new *régime* technical and industrial schools may still be permitted; but probably there will be little place or leisure for such mere luxuries as learning or art, for their own sakes. Genius will be formally declared (what it virtually is now) a penal offence, because it testifies to inequality, and the ideal is a dead level of Philistine mediocrity, in which the barren plain may have the satisfaction of feeling itself equal to the

fruitful hill, which it can hardly do till the latter has been properly pared down. Man must revert to pure stomach and claw, partly because he is all body, though he affects to be also spirit; and to vegetate in bodily comfort ought to be his chief concern, partly that his own flesh and blood, which he is pleased to stigmatise as 'lower animals,' may no longer feel offended by his superiority. Those aboriginal gorillas, when the first simian aristocrat showed signs of incipient evolution, ought obviously to have protested, and nipped that bloated man-monkey in the bud. The golden age sung by poets will surely arrive when all shall have been reduced to the low standard of our own pet average inferiority—for, as it is our own, must it not be best?—when no discovery and no invention, no original work in art, no heroic exemplar of illustrious life shall any longer be possible. Neither may there be any more spontaneous sacrifice of right, or pleasure for alien good; forbidden shall be free play of limb, and gracious colour of distinctive individuality in joyous self-development; all shall be one monotony of cast-iron under the stupid tyranny of a jealous multitude, incapable of sympathetic admiration for what is different from themselves, though equally natural and needed, incapable of reverence for what is above, exalting into an idol *Custom*, which is the dense folly, the base and stunted unloveliness of each one multiplied into that of all his neighbours. None of us have any superiors; that notion is a relic of servility and dependence. The way to succeed in a given undertaking is to quench the adepts and past masters in it, so as not to risk offending any infusorial or Lilliputian susceptibility, that its possessor may be able to hold up the little head, and strut with conceit unruffled, complacently boasting its own ability in full measure to 'whip creation.' For has not the ostrich taught us to ignore unwelcome facts by hiding our heads in the sand? If a grand guide, born upon the flank of a mighty mountain, offered to show some puny, black-coated

citizen from yonder plain the direct and easiest way up to the summit, at all hazards let the free and enlightened cockney insist that his guide shall go behind, or abreast, and on no account in front of him! Oh! that will be joyful, when all is marsh and croaking frog, when the mountain shall be level with the morass, and there shall be no eagle to soar over it, or invite to aspire heavenward! What a sweet place the world would be if we could only rid ourselves of Miranda and Ferdinand by a process of throat-cutting, and so prevent any further propagation of their insolent superiority, for then should we be left free to populate it *ad libitum* with Caliban and Sycorax, made in our own ugly image. Then what comfortable sprawling and wallowing in muck-heaps, well beloved! with no remonstrance, or reprehension more from any possible censor! Then would the world revert to that halcyon epoch, unfortunately left so far behind, when those dear 'dragons of the prime. tare one another in their slime.'

("The running comment on suchlike astounding proposals for ameliorating the lot of man, by suppression of all his aspirations after a veritable amelioration—even now, I should have imagined, too rare for the much to be desiderated evolution of higher possibilities in him—may, indeed, be mine, but the substance of them is correctly reported, and they certainly appeared to me infatuated beyond measure.)

"If a source be poisoned, then (said another interlocutor, differing) all you have to do is to alter the arrangement of the conduits; that will make the water drinkable and wholesome; 'cælum, non animam mutant, qui trans mare currunt.' Ah! but that man was a fool, for he talked Latin, and not English! At any rate, *we* know that the regeneration of a man's soul is secure if only he can remove into a larger and better furnished house over the way. Taylor's vans, in the light of this discovery, acquire a quite sacred, novel, and mystic significance. Man never wants more than

the golden mean, which is a fixed quantity, the exact area of which any common measuring tape is, of course, competent to determine. You only need add to this virtue of external prosperity a little blue pill, or a liver pad, in case of internal derangement, and then the human subject will be 'thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' 'How hardly shall the rich man,' was a slip of the tongue; congratulation, rather, having been intended. Only that the *wrong* people are rich now; and fairly may *they* be denounced. Let riches change hands, and all will be right for ever. Or are there no bad and unhappy rich men? I thought there were, and that this was what the row was all about.

"Yet when another speaker alluded to the main social problem at present being a right distribution of our great wealth among the people at large, he spoke wisely. Think of the shame and horror of workhouse, or starvation, as only alternative goals possible on our present economical system to a long career of honest toil: think of the terrific chasms that sever classes, the unequal proportion of wage, or profit paid to manual labour. A *minimum* of material property and well-being is the *Pou sto* and fulcrum for spiritual or intellectual progress. What of our white slave-girls, slaving night and day for a pittance insufficient to keep body and soul together, till their very flesh and blood compels them to sell their souls to the devil, whether they will or no? Think of our national prosperity, our luxury, our comfort, our domestic respectability, and the sweet, happy, cleanly virtue of our sisters and daughters, all founded complacently upon this quicksand of hideous wrong, that cries to all the worlds and all the abysses for redress—cries night and day, till One descend to avenge—set in order this world-confusion—to avenge the souls of them crying under the altar. And shall He not avenge His own elect, although He tarry long? or shall this quaking quicksand unaware engulf all? Every man, woman, and

child has a sacred, inviolable, inalienable individuality, that may claim as a right from society respect, sympathy, and free development. While the separation and want of familiar intercourse between classes, together with the excessive division of labour, are very deeply to be deplored. All honest and useful work demands appreciation, with equitable remuneration. It is not equality of material prosperity that we want—nor worship and slavish prostration before wealth, as an idol—nor, indeed, before any other social, racial, or mental distinction; though honour be due to it, if a real one. Refinement, race, talent, beauty, are worthy of all honour; but so, also, are goodness, and honest work. Thus said the speaker, and one assented with all the heart. Let men or women (he continued) seek for *congenial* occupation, if that can be found; but, above all, let them respect themselves, and claim respect from others as honourable producers for the family and the community, whatever their function, not feverishly aspire to change their sphere for one more conventionally, but not more veritably, estimable, in hope to win a false and hollow consideration from fools, a cordial welcome into the charmed circle of inane automata, all varnish and all veneer.

“He talked admirable sense about the expediency of co-operative production, and the obligation on all, as members of a community, to contribute their share of labour for the common good. Socialism, while exaggerated and short-sighted, points out the *direction* of our future progress, though not precisely the right road. There is, indeed, a minimum of material well-being, without which no spiritual life, as a rule, is possible. ‘Give me neither poverty nor riches.’ But different kinds of work are needed, and a leisured class seems also needed to secure that fit and right variety; while no complete development, or absolutely equal partition of this world’s goods is possible for all, here and now; nor, were it possible, would it be very desirable.

Patience and faith are always needed, and by every man, in view of our frailty, and the incalculable dealings with us of human destiny. While as for idleness, there is a fertile and wise idleness. It is a good thing to know how and when to loaf. The stupid tyranny of a Philistine majority is bad enough in its unwritten code of ‘public opinion,’ blown about by tea-table tittle-tattle; what would it be, consolidated into parchments, and driven home by vigilance committees, or prying inspectors? Individuality, within social limits broad and tolerant, needs nurture and protection; yet to do work of public benefit more effectually, doubtless the State may profitably and equitably intervene—also to nurture and protect the weak.

“But, indeed, we are to begin *de novo*, reverse the growth of heredity and evolution, make a *tabula rasa* of the past by act of parliament, jump off our own shadows, retrospectively quash and cancel the mother’s milk that nourished us, post up at the town hall a bye-law for the abolition of the air we breathe, and let a vestry quorum vote the elimination of all the blood from our bodies, as tainted ancestrally, open to grave suspicion of political obscurantism, as deriving from a feudal origin. Or—no—let’s have a *plébiscite*! That, as a ‘cute popular journal assured us lately, is sure to be infallible—Obviously! For was it not a *plébiscite* which chose Barabbas, and rejected Christ; in politics, embraced the second French empire; in literature, preferred Waller and Cowley to Milton; Samuel Rogers, and Tom Moore (true, yet inferior poets) to Landor, Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, and Coleridge? Therefore, sirs, let us have your ‘voices’!

“Meanwhile, one would suppose that (whatever may be in store for them of earthly prosperity, over and above that spirit of greed, envy, class-hatred, and blood-thirstiness, inculcated by their prophets as

promising dispositions for securing happiness) the majority hitherto have hardly enjoyed such a surfeit and superfluity of good things here that their gorge need rise at the very mention of a fuller and more invigorating meal provided elsewhere! Are they the persons, then, whose stomachs have been so crammed that they insist upon a plethoric slumber of indigestion, which must not on any account know waking—having done work, moreover, of such transcendent value for the universe that they desire henceforward to be put on the retired list, and pensioned off in perpetuity, while the world moves on its high and majestic course, with no help more, or shadow of passing interest from them? Ought not the universe to be grateful for what it has got from them already, leaving them henceforward to rest in peace, rousing them no more from slumber, early or late, but suffering them to rot indolently in graves, while the Triumph of Life passes onward, while the wonderful Yggdrasil of Ages burgeons ever, and ripens in fruit and flower—in fruit and flower of suns and satellites, with their teeming infinitude of mutually-involved, and included conscious lives? But the eternal almshouse *they* would retire to, with idleness for everlasting dole, is Annihilation. 'No, we won't play any more!—the nature of things in general has disgusted us too thoroughly.' Surely this is but a spurious altruism, that overleaps itself, and falls on the other side! So nobly oblivious of self are they, so absorbed in active and contemplative sympathy with the universe, that they become perfectly contented such disinterested sympathy should cease, relapsing into everlasting indifference, after an hour! Is not that a lop-sided, topsy-turvy altruism, that does not really know what it wants, or why, but proceeds to contradict, devour, and defeat itself? And do they show unselfishness quite up to such high standard in their present lives? Self-sacrifice, self-absorption, if you please!—but that is possible only on condition that there remain, though implicit, a self to be

'sacrificed,' or 'absorbed'! So much for the *ethical* aspect—

"And as for the *intellectual*; if the sole conceivable, discriminating, comparing, remembering organiser and constitutive element of any possible experience, one self-identifying, conscious individuality, one and self-identical through all change, be not the permanent substantial factor of existence, above birth and death, beyond time and space, what is it?

"Being, Force, the Unknowable, the Unconscious—these are mere thin abstractions from the living real Human, with its intellect and emotion; all phenomena are necessarily phenomena of some consciousness, which is the only integrating, differentiating Power we can conceive possible; while all consciousness is necessarily individual, however superior to our actual imperfect consciousness—however all-embracing by sympathy, transcending by inclusion—necessarily involves emotion also; otherwise, where do we obtain it?—So I heard an interlocutor say. Well, at all events (he proceeded), do not let these sulky dyspeptics of the school of Schopenhauer pose as martyrs and heroes, sublime in self-abnegation! *That* is a little too much. It's all their modesty—who are they that they should live again? '*Wollt ihr immer leben?*' as Mr. Carlyle's hero said to his 'food for powder.' Of what further use can they presume to be? Well, if they feel themselves played out, and surfeited with success or notoriety, perhaps the universe *may* graciously dispense with their future services, and send them about their business into that oblivious and oblivioned nonentity, which they modestly judge most suitable to their humble requirements; and, after all, who should know better than themselves about that? Possibly wind-bags, after pricking, are with difficulty blown out again. I admit that if I were freely mentioned by my friends, and quoted in the cheap press, little would remain to me but to sing the *Nunc Dimittis*, and shut up for ever after. Of this, alas! I have no experience; but it

must needs be a soul-satiating one, assuredly. Indeed, if I had thus been voted among 'the immortals,' so sure should I be of my 'immortality,' that, in order to secure it, bedad, wouldn't I (my friend was evidently an Irishman, and perhaps the grapes were sour!) perform the 'happy despatch' forthwith, upon myself and upon them, lest one day I should cease to deserve their favours, or my immortalisers should change their minds, and so deprive me of a little decoration, obviously in the power of a few casual passers-by to confer (too evidently the speaker was envious of those on whom the decoration *had been* already conferred—by themselves and their disciples—and who had thus become already indisputably 'immortal'!)—posterity notoriously holding itself bound to confirm all the transitory whims of its forefathers, however self-contradictory! And an immortality in human gabble, so long as a language lasts, and no Caliph Omar burns a library—what an honour! Ah, me! how many fine things destined for immortality have long since rotted upon the dust-heap, been diverted from their high destiny to glut the maw of Oblivion. 'C'est Boulanger qu'il nous faut!' And some one else to-morrow—Napoleon yesterday. Proud Sesostri, indeed, before whom the world trembled, grand and awful even in death, sealed 'for ever' in his royal pyramid, to-day is fingered, and his identity disputed, by black-coated professors of alien race—a race then all undreamed in the womb of a far future—at Boulaq, or British Museum; next he may furnish an object-lesson for one of our Board-schools, to illustrate the ancient art of embalming mummies! And, ah! how many 'immortal' bards of ancient Egypt are very dead indeed; or let somebody now call over but their names? 'Unknown, and unknowable!'

"Inspiration of bibles, and revelations, forsooth (I heard one of the clever men in this group say)! We are rather too wide-awake for that now. Why, we can give you an infallible receipt for writing bibles—tell

you all the ingredients—only be sure to mix them well, and put in the right proportions! At all events, we can furnish you with a neat algebraical formula, which shall adequately represent their composition by symbolising our exhaustive analysis of the process. Here it is—A, B, C, D—very simple and easy to remember. Let A stand for the right hemisphere, or *dextro*-cerebral, ideational nervous centres of the brain, B for the word-hearing, C for the image-seeing, D for the word-writing centres. Then this right hemisphere being nothing but a man-trap, a sheer delusion-mongering department, in that pulpy thought-manufacturing apparatus so obligingly provided for man by the step-motherly solicitude of that great 'Unknowable,' in whose charge he finds himself, it is evident that when this interferes, its influence (if a play upon words may be permitted) must prove quite dexterously sinister; and the person will find himself most unmercifully hoaxed, and hocused merely by the malign interior arrangements of his own nature and constitution. For the brain is discovered to be a material mill, ingeniously adapted for grinding grist that has never been brought to it—cornflour out of stones—consciousness, namely, out of the Unconscious—reason, love, moral judgment, and sensibility out of oxygen, nitrogen, and carbon, arranged in the form of albumen. All the secret lies in the arrangement. Shuffle the elements well! And then, hocus pocus! The conjurer's hat is nothing to it. 'Walk up, walk up, ladies and gentlemen! See Christmas Day put into my hat! and Westminster Bridge emerge!' That makes all so simple, doesn't it! Now, the *sinistro*-cerebral department of this potent automatic god-and-man manufactory is capable of turning out a much more decent and reliable article in the way of gods and men than the *dextro*-cerebral.

"Who, then, or what constructed this patent god-and-man manufactory itself, if *it* is the origin of ourselves, and of all we know?' I ventured to put in here. But I got as little of a satisfactory answer as Alice

got from the Mad Hatter. Indeed, that tea-party she went to appeared to me very similar, on the whole, to this club-gathering of 'men of light and leading.' However, I seemed to be a sort of inaudible and invisible ghost to these good people, who apparently were unaware that any one out of their own circle had spoken. This, indeed, was a dream, and queer things happen in dreams. But has not many a waking poet experienced the same feeling before? I am informed that it is rather like trying to breathe in an exhausted receiver, or fly easily about in a vacuum. I felt sorry I spoke, though something, I suppose, will make me speak again. People, it is true, have a way of not hearing disagreeable or puzzling questions. Perhaps they don't always understand them.

"The *dextro*-cerebral department (he proceeded gravely, and with conviction) is, indeed, responsible for all this fatuous mischief of bible-making, ecclesiastical authority, superstition, and so on. Nay, it actually has the impudence to set up for a second (though unconscious) individuality inside our own, simulating some foreign intelligence and character apart from and opposed to ours—while actually part and parcel of ourselves all the time! Thus are we all born with a treacherous imp established in the very citadel of our own personality. And, worse luck! we cannot turn him out—a parasite nourished upon our own life-juices! Well, see now how reprehensible is the conduct of this masquerading, secondary self, pretending to be some one else—this ill-conditioned Puck of a right hemisphere, whom we have called A! What does it now do? Why, it proceeds to play upon B, the word-hearing, and C, the image-seeing nervous centres—without any provocation whatsoever, or injunction from outside, from any real object—but just out of sheer native love of mischief, and disposition to practical joking, however tremendous the consequences upon its unfortunate conscious companion, condemned to live with it in the same skull. For this of course makes the man to whom it happens

suppose that he hears a message of transcendent import from some angel, or, perhaps, even from god himself (it is better to write this name with a small g, and so discourage superstition), which he is commissioned to deliver to the world. Then at once D, the word-writing centre, is, by means of a diabolically ingenious piece of mechanism (verily, a sort of physiological infernal machine!), set to work—and writes the message down—becomes, in fact, the property and servant for the time being of this concealed conspirator; just as if foreigners in the guise of natives should possess themselves of a telegraph office, and send false news to the national government. So do bibles, and illusory revelations get themselves scribbled off by the yard, to the profit of priests, and such-like blood-sucking leeches of the community! It is too shameful!

"But in the present day we are without excuse if we remain ignorant of these things. Are we masters in Israel, and know them not? For all that is needed is some elementary information about physiology, which, with our Board-schools and cheap primers, is easily attainable. Fancy these messages claiming to be Heaven-descended, while as a matter of fact descending from no higher or sublimer source than the disordered right hemisphere of a fool's skull, setting up for itself, ventriloquising and masquerading for its own amusement! It may be rather odd that thought *should* rise so much higher than its own level; but that old law about levels applied only to water, and, moreover, being so old, it is very probably repealed by this time; or if not, why, it ought to be! And this is the kind of thing that was for so long, and so universally, supposed to be given by Divine inspiration, as also to be 'profitable for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness!' To think that a little ordinary cram on the part of any elementary examination-coach of the present day would have sufficed to set right these stupendous mistakes of old wisacres imagined to be prophets of the human race,

had it been heretofore attainable—would have correctly informed the world's apostles, preventing altogether, for instance, the propagation of Christianity, Buddhism, and other absurd religions, by us in these latter days finally exploded!

"These mistakes, moreover, have been, singularly enough, committed not only by savage races, by poor and ignorant people, but by the highest intellects, the most transcendently virtuous and heroic natures, resting, all of them, small and great, weak and powerful, on those same fictitious promises, and hollow consolations, which—while they proved mighty to the pulling down of strongholds—endowed men, women, and children also with patient strength to bear and conquer fate, confront with serene resolve extremest rigour of suffering, unintermittent blows of hard misfortune, welcome the last enemy with a smile of triumphant joy, in 'sure and certain hope'—yet all had for sole origin some diseased pulp within the cranium, aided by the calculating machinations of a doting priest! Verily this same cellular pulp is a potent magician, responsible for a good deal. Hudibras informs us that—

'Bombastes kept a devil bird,  
Shut in the pommel of his sword.'

But what was that familiar spirit to these so potent and perverse *dextro-cerebral* centres we all keep shut in our own skulls? But, then, has not the old poet shrewdly noted from what insignificant causes greatest events are wont to spring? 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.' Ah! how much better, then, to be overcome by the world, and trampled under its iron feet, or go down in some fierce strife, endeavouring with unprofitable fury, born of envy and unreason, to wrest from it that uniform success, that external prosperity, which eternal laws deny, which would be so disappointing when obtained, and which, passionately sought, only fires with inex-

tinguishable craving for more and more. Why, it is the very fuel which feeds hell-flame, they are bidding us seek, desiderate, or steal! At all costs let us remain undeluded, now that an infallible *physical* science has, once for all, authoritatively belittled and bemocked for us the *spiritual* hopes and heritage of a heretofore bamboozled humanity! 'Conscience and affection demand satisfaction as much as sense and understanding,'—did you say?—'and are as much entitled to receive it. That cannot be true, which flouts and insults them.' Nay, you rave! What are these? Can you see or touch them? Are they something good to eat? Do they bring power, comfort, consideration? Sense, and the pigeon-holing faculty called understanding are the only possible and legitimate organs of knowledge. At any rate, they have *our* authorised and official imprimatur, while your spiritual aspirations and intuitions are consigned to our *index expurgatorius*.

"This discussion was going on not far off, between the illustrious Professor Bathybius, and some one who seemed to disagree with him, stemming with difficulty the strong flood-tide of materialism and negation. These, then, are specimens, I thought, of the mental and moral husks, or thistles, which some folk are content to eat, and this is what we are offered in place of the 'everlasting gospel!' That has been overlaid, too well I know, with man's perversity, misunderstanding, and corruption; but at least there is a kernel of nourishing food there, a gleam from thence upon the outer darkness; here, none at all, only confusion worse confounded, a fatuous, self-complacent rejection of all reason and all hope. Were Ezekiel, John of Patmos, and all the old seers, then, born naturals? And Milton? And he who saw the visions of hell, heaven, and purgatory, singing, 'In la sua voluntade e nostra pace'? And a Greater than these, who imagined that He came from God, and went to God, His inmost spirit remaining in heaven even while He was upon earth, revealing God to men?

Oh! the great assurance of the little blind guides, glorying in their blindness, who dare fancy it!

"Yet to none do I yield in admiration for, and gratitude to Science herself, that latest and best teller of fairy-tales, when she discovers new uses, wonders, and beauties in the outer world of nature, as in our own bodies; only let her stick to her own last, nor intrude into regions too high for her, with her pseudo-explanations, and arrogant denials, questioning the competency of her elder sisters, Theology, and Metaphysique, in those provinces, which were native to them of old before she was born. 'For,' said the idealist, addressing Professor Bathybius, 'if the cerebral process, even with the intervention of an object admittedly external to the individual perceiver (whether real or ideal is not now the question), cannot at all explain the normal perception of colour, form, solidity, and so on, or the veriest elementary sensation—which is the fact—how is it going to explain that more uncommon intuition of a super-sensible sphere, and the sublime relations appertaining thereto, without the intervention of any corresponding super-sensible object? If all be subjective hallucination in the last case, why not also in the former? which yet common sense pronounces an absurd conclusion. For then there could be no intercourse of man with man, no justification for the belief that any person exists other than one's own particular self. Nor is it any answer to appeal to a common consent present in one case, but absent in the other, because, first, the objectivity of other persons has to be *assumed* before any argument can be founded upon their consent; and, secondly, the conditions of normal perception are probably alike for ordinary perceivers, whereas they are evidently different for the extraordinary, which would quite sufficiently account for the latter's perception and comprehension being different also, without supposing illusion in one case, and not in the other. Above all, how can the brain be the source, and cause of thought and

sensibility, to say nothing of conscience and affection, when the very notion of a brain itself involves a pre-formed, pre-existing thought and sensibility, to make this very brain conceivable at all? Brain and body are notions of some thinker, implying the conscious unity, and implicit self-identification of that thinker in memory, as also his comparing, distinguishing faculty.'<sup>1</sup> I confess I thought the idealist had the best of it here. The Professor, however, in reply, made his little joke. He said, 'Don't be too hard on brains; leave that to the clergy; they are interested in depreciating brains, and so may stand excused! Besides, what you say is *mysticism*. It means nothing—at least, it's too deep for me. I don't understand you.' And the popular press agreed with him. Yet to grin through a horse-collar at an argument, or intellectual position is, perhaps, not quite the same as to turn, or carry it by storm. But Folly, like Wisdom, is justified of her children. So long as an intelligent public demands buffoons, literary, or otherwise, it will get them. The majority can laugh loudest, and their hilarity is contagious. If when a certain Prophet said those disagreeable things about a woman taken in adultery, some professional joker among the conventionally pious Jews had but thought of making a joke about His coat not being brushed, or His hair being unkempt, the multitude of hollow-holy people, indulging in a guffaw, would have gone away better pleased with themselves, and in a better humour with everybody else.

"But, stunned and bewildered between all these clever, if pretentious jabberings, characteristic of this age of confused and contradictory voices, I rushed out into the

<sup>1</sup> I think he added that, unless you postulate a one and self-identical ego, or spirit, behind experience, no rational, connected experience is possible; at best you could only have disjointed, indistinguishable blurs of feeling, even if so much as that.

open, perhaps somewhat unceremoniously,  
and in my dream—

# RAGNAROK

“When I went from forth the hall I was  
bewildered,  
Whirled as in a war of primal atoms,  
While a cloud of buzzing theories befogged me,  
Stunned, and flew in misted eyes of under-  
standing.

“Firm foundations of the old world were  
removing,  
Shuddering under, involved in their death-  
throes:

Magnificent grey temples ever-enduring,  
Eternal 'mid the mazy moil of mortals,  
Holding far-withdrawn communion with  
stars,

In the reflux of the human generations  
Ebbing, flowing, round their high abiding  
calm,

When the worshippers confidently sought  
sanctuary,  
Threw themselves with wild appeal before  
the gods,

Sudden yawning with grey walls to swallow all,  
Bowed, and fell upon them!

“Young-eyed gods, ah! ye were beautiful  
in May-time!

Now, in burning, lurid gloom of dying day,  
Ye are withered, looking old, and wan and  
weary,

While your pale priest mutters palsied by the  
altar,

Your altar hurled asunder with contumely,  
And a roll of smothered wrath from under-  
ground!

Your wild worshippers entreat you at your  
shrine;

But in burning, lurid gloom of dying day,  
Lo! ye reeling fall upon them!

“Bells clang jingling-jangling in the steeples,  
Drunken steeples, flickering like fire,  
Thunder rumbles in the dungeons of the  
earth-god

And the gaping earth gulphs all!  
Lo! the masquers, and the mummers, in con-  
fusion,

Hurrying panic-stricken through the high-  
way,

In disordered gala dresses from the revel,  
With the lions, panthers, horses from the  
show,

Shaking scared, with their man-tamers, while  
the flowers

Are strewn about the pavement where they  
fell

From the white hands of inebriates who  
threw them,

Mad with orgy, mad with joy!

Sinuous wine from tumbled goblet dyes the  
palace;

And the men want not the women any  
longer;

Flimsy booths of the gay fair are all awry;  
No resounding more of brazen vaunting  
accents

From the humorous showman showing off  
the monster;

The man of motley runneth swiftly flying. . .

“Lo! the guillotine is reared! the tocsin  
threatens!

Men with rude gnarled arms, and rags, and  
gory bosoms,

Red and rough as dragons, butcher grimly. . .  
Earth, a Pandemonium. . .

All an infinite flood of night, with ne'er a  
refuge,

A roaring, ravening flood, with ne'er an  
ark,

Nor a dove with leaf of olive!

Sick abortions of the maddened brain  
colliding

Grapple one another in the gloom,  
Going under, with the drifting wrecks of  
empire,

Orders, faiths, and commonwealths that  
shock together,

Mutually destroying, as the armed men  
Sprung from dragon's teeth of old. . .

O Ragnarok, O twilight

Of the gods, a world confounded!

## STUMP ORATORY

"Now it seemed that all was still again, and that I was making my way to Hyde Park. As I went, I found some refreshment for my soul; for a ruddy-faced, clear-eyed little boy in a blouse, who belonged to the upper classes, was acting a 'puff-puff,' blowing, putting one little fist before him for buffers, and twisting the other for wheels, running on before his nurse, and stamping his little feet. Then, again, a poor ragged urchin, with brown legs and arms, was turning a Catherine-wheel for a copper or two, while another stood, broom in hand, whining, 'Copper, sweep, please, sir!' Then there was a Punch and Judy show, before which a lot of little children were gaping in silent and open-mouthed admiration. They would reproduce the drama in their games, nose-voiced Punch and all, when they got home.

"On the pretty Serpentine swans and ducks were floating; prattling, delighted toddlers feeding them with crumbs. Boys were sailing toy ships, boats rowing up and down, some with happy lovers in them; the fine old trees wore their early green, and many flowers were out; the usual riders rode to and fro in the Row, and the usual idlers stared at them, while the carriages moved in their customary long streams, with the ordinary fine people inside.

"But I came now to an open space where crowds were gathered; here mob-orators swayed the surging throngs with contagious vehemence of words, and violence of gesticulation, like wind arousing waves to roar and destroy. One to whom I listened flattered the new king, *Demos*, quite as grossly as any courtier ever flattered a more old-fashioned monarch, and with about as much sincerity. The many-headed sovereign, moreover, appeared fully as gullible as the ruler with one head only—perhaps more. But the numerous heads of a hydra are less easy to get rid of by lopping than the single one of a higher animal (the amiable Commodus

thought so). King *Demos*, however, is easily led by the nose with a little cajolery. The demagogue was inciting to violence, bloodshed, and plunder, men and women in rags, gaunt and famished, or idle, brutal, and malignant; another was giving stones (or plaster) for bread in the form of atheistic materialism, of the same quality as that of which I had been tasting a sample at the club; only rather more highly spiced with blasphemy and obscenity, to suit a rougher palate; indeed, a policeman standing by thought of running him in for it. Of course he had not thought of running in Mr. Cultus, the highly accomplished president of our literary academy—first, because neither he nor the magistrate could have understood that gentleman's refined irony, even if they had ever heard of him, or of his books; and, secondly, because so rude a procedure might have seemed inapposite, and scarcely lucid; for Mr. Cultus didn't brutally slay our gods with a bludgeon before the populace, but, with an esoteric smile, before a select circle assembled in an inner chamber, delicately opened a vein; protesting the while that he had only taken them in there to wash their faces, cut their hair, and improve their general appearance. Nay, he had but given them a well-bred and demure kiss; if there-upon the crude and sour-smelling mob, with ugly names, figures, and faces, seized and hurried to crucifixion, could *he* be held responsible? I trow not.

"The stump orator, however, of the dirty bristles, brute jowl, and bloodshot eyes, was screaming that next time the people had a chance they would not be so moderate; all the accursed brood of kings, priests, and nobles, should be extirpated, not one be left to beget or bring forth young vipers; loathly and obscene ecclesiastical bats should be hunted from comfortable clefts of darkness in obsolete old temples. And their works, too, shall perish with them! All monuments of art, ancient historical piles, with their archives, all palaces and churches, shall be burned, or razed to earth, and the site

sown with salt. The vermin shall be destroyed, with all the accursed dens that shelter them! Hell-fire of hatred blazed from eyes and lips, like flames from charred and marred abysms, that have once been door and windows in a consuming and dismantled house. But although undoubtedly this man pointed to terrible evils, his remedies seemed mostly impracticable and in the air, while his spirit was but the ugly counterpart of the tyrant's own; he sought to stir up mutual rancour and bad blood, while making unjust and exaggerated accusations, even committing the sin against the Holy Ghost by calumniating that gentle and ardent spirit of charity, which prompts nowadays many an honest effort to further alien good. Indeed, he seemed a sort of man-eating tiger transmigrated into human shape, and the fiends chuckled audibly when he had spoken. But doubtless he was well paid, and looked comfortable enough in his black coat.

"Now an Italian organ-boy with a monkey came near to listen. Suddenly the monkey leapt upon the shoulders of the demagogue, and chattered there, mimicking the man's vehement gesticulations. It was all up! The mobile crowd burst into guffaws of inextinguishable laughter, and after indulging in chaff and horseplay at the tribune's expense, melted away to witness the nimbler and more exciting acrobatic antics of a rival mountebank hard by. But the lover of humanity in a fury, descending from his elevated position, and having with difficulty got rid of the monkey, cuffed the little organ-boy unmercifully, as a practical illustration of that justice and mercy, the want of which, in a fine frenzy of virtue, he had even now so eloquently denounced in a selfish priesthood, and a bloated aristocracy.

" 'Make him a bishop!' said a wag, when one complained of a too zealous ecclesiastical reformer; and so, perhaps, if you could have seated this bitter revolutionist in the high and comfortable places he inveighed against, his tone might have undergone modification, and his native bile have found

as much sinister satisfaction in denouncing denouncers. Did not Raoul Rigaud of the Paris Commune revel on the fat of the land when he could get it, or was he still as virtuously indignant with anything like fat? Footpads *in excelsis*, footpads with a convenient theory, lolling drunk on thrones, defacing, mucking, and making firewood of them, wrenching consecrated patens from off the altars, with bestial gibe, and carrying them in mock processions of monkey-mummers! Such is the monarch of many heads, with a minimum of brains in them. His cunning courtiers, his bear-leaders, moreover, have invented a moral basin of water for him, in the which, like Pilate, he may wash his dirty hands, and after that lustration account himself even praise, rather than blame, worthy! For they have discovered, and assured him that the thrones, honours, and better clothing of more fortunate men have themselves been filched from the people, wrung out of the bloody sweat of their enslavement, and ill-requested toil! In that plea, moreover, one must admit some justification. Herein may be revealed to us, indeed, that mysterious, incorruptible, inevitable Nemesis of the gods, so sure, however silent and slow-footed! But the instruments of Heaven's vengeance are not necessarily guiltless. 'The Son of man goeth, as it was written of Him.' Yet 'woe to that man, by whom the Son of man is betrayed.' For because A robbed B, it does by no means evidently follow that G may innocently rob F, and that no injustice is done to the latter. Otherwise, what human contract soever, what title to property, or civilising security for tranquil possession, and peaceable living could be proved or regarded as valid and assured? Yet this is the very first condition of Liberty, the safeguard, sentinel, inviolable forecourt, citadel, and environment of human dignity, self-respect, and self-development. Or shall two wrongs, perchance, make a right? If common Conservatism be callous contentment, common Radicalism is cruel envy.

Nor am I aware that this man was especially kind at any time to *individual* organ-boys, or any other persons who might happen to need him, in the concrete, though rabid about the wrongs of Organ-boy, and People in the abstract. Apparently he preferred 'the People' to any particular person. Indeed, he was violent in his denunciation of 'pauperising,' and 'degrading' charity exercised toward any dirty and disagreeable individual Jones or Brown (*e.g.* helping him fraternally to tide over a bad time, as we might expect him to help us, if he were in our place), just like any political economist; though fanatical in his devotion to Humanity with a big H. In the grand universal overturn, which alone could satisfy his ambitious aspirations, this particular organ-boy might happen to tumble uppermost, or he might not. At all events, somebody would, and not those who are uppermost now, which is the main object. His large and lofty soul could only expatiate in vast, unwieldy, theoretic schemes, that will not fit any actually existing circumstances; he cannot condescend to potter over, and tinker at mere petty particular cases of misfortune, or minister to individual necessities, as they present themselves—unless, indeed, some distantly-related third person, or some objectionable system may lend himself, or itself, to eloquent denunciation; a rich man, for instance, who, *quâ* rich, is necessarily a tyrant.

"I, strolling away, stopped to listen to a religious preacher—a stern, somewhat uneducated Puritan, holding up Jesus Christ, and evidently blessed with a strong personal love to Him. He seemed an earnest and true man, though one whose outlook was singularly confined. Indeed, the doctrine he preached was dishonouring to our highest idea of God; while this life, as he represented it, became a poor and colourless thing, a mere low and squalid passage to another and better, through which we were bound to hurry, as it were, without looking about us, lest we might be

tempted to linger; but this surely was an insult to Him, who had made it so large and rich and beautiful for those who have eyes to see. How, upon these terms, can we do our needful work effectually, with consecrating and quickening spirit, resolved to adorn and idealise every humblest nook and corner, reclaiming from evil, and claiming for God? As the delightful old religious poet sings—

'Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws  
Makes that and the action fine.'

If we are so dissatisfied with Earth, moreover, is it certain that we shall be any better contented with Heaven? The *spirit* of such religion is a wrong one. The bush always burns with fire, though only Moses may see it, and know the common earth for holy ground. God is here, as well as there. Sour, jaundiced, unwholesome, inhuman, and selfish is that gospel of seclusion and exclusion, that exhortation to busy ourselves about 'saving our own souls' from a threatened wrath to come. Election, reprobation, the total depravity of human nature, and everlasting punishment, throw very little light, at all events, over those terrible problems of victim and tyrant, undeserved suffering of the weak and innocent, that haunted, oppressed, and made me doubt of eternal justice. Rather these doctrines make darkness visible by exhibiting in the Eternal Abyss the monstrous Image of a Supreme God, made in the lurid likeness of evil, arbitrary men.

"Sadly moving away, I noted a pale youth declaiming and denouncing—quite as evidently sincere too. The burning iron of cruel oppression, of dire misfortune—not all his own, but also of those dear to him—that of the great dumb human suffering people,—had entered into his very marrow: those terrible words of his were charged with no insignificant anguish—ready to lighten a devouring sword in the heart of society—with no impotent and immemorable subter-

reanean thunder of earth-upheaving, righteous, and destroying anger. A destroying angel he! an *Enjolras*—yet to him few listened: men may listen, however, one day, and that not distant, when opportunity has matured; and then, woe! woe! to the heedless, wanton, wicked, oppressive city! Evil voices chuckle amid the far-off murmur and mutter of impending civic storm! But the holy angels also are invisibly near him, those awful indignant ones, who opened the seals of Divine judgment in the seer's Apocalyptic Vision. For if Justice and Mercy will not work peaceably and genially for reformation, the necessary work will be done more clumsily, through earthquake and volcanic violence. After all, the people at large have benefited substantially even by the horrors of Revolution; they are emancipated, and growing, with whatever serious shortcomings, and defects—the scars, wounds, diseases incidental to cataclysmal crisis, and interrupted, insufficient, inappropriate, unassimilated food. But World-education should now progress more quietly, with less of hideous, exhausting convulsion.

#### BEWILDERMENT

“Then, returning in a maze, I met my comrades.

All of them have unaware grown grey;  
A little while ago, and they were youthful;  
It seemed as if a year had made them old.  
Is the hour of former intercourse so far, then?  
But I am all bewildered with the change!  
And though, indeed, I feel myself yet youthful,  
I learn from them that I am growing old.  
For they also look bewildered when they meet me,

With an air as if they wondered at my youth;  
Then with self-reproving I behold them,  
Feeling ready to sink with them into night.  
Young lithe forms, and fresh young faces  
move around me;

I know how the time-torrent hurries all!  
Again the earth appeared to shiver, swooning  
under,

All that hath been solid a mere cloud;  
I remembered how but yesterday I met them,  
Whom we call dead, while we talked at the  
street corners,

Even here where we who name ourselves the  
living

Are conversing now: in glory flashing by me.  
Lo! the beautiful, the young with their light  
laughter,

The beautiful, the young, fulfilled with life!  
Ah! how gently flow the years of sunny  
boyhood,

Wandering they hardly seem to move:  
Now swift runners, lo! they jostle rushing  
onward,

Eager hurrying, hurrying headlong to the  
goal, . . .

Massy billowy water lightening to the fall! . . .  
And I hear a peal of bells from a near steeple,  
Very like the peal of bells in my far home;  
A child again I wander in the woodland,  
Pick the daisies, rove beside the water,  
And my sister smiles behind her bridal veil,  
Emerging from the chamber to be married,  
She who lieth in her sleep below the hill. . . .  
All the voices dwindle while I hear them,  
The faces fade; I know not whence, or  
whither,

Why, or how we travel in the world-show,  
Doubt of now, nor understand before, and  
after!

#### BOOK V.—DISORDER

##### CANTO I.—NATURE—THE SEA, AND THE LIVING CREATURES

“THEN I thought, in the bosom of Nature,  
whom I love so, who has revealed herself  
to me from a boy, will I forget now the  
misery caused by human sin, hardness, in-  
difference, and mad cruelty—forget these  
confusions also of poor human understand-  
ing, vainly endeavouring to pierce the dark-  
ness of a night unassuageable by any star,  
troubled only, not illuminated, with sinister

fires of wreckers along the shore, where  
human ravage lies tossing in the wild surge,  
ground to fragments on the iron rocks. And  
now I found myself by the sea.

“The cliffs resemble a roll of long reverberate  
thunder,

Dark solid-bodied form of some rock-crashing  
peal,

Long reverberate roll of a loud tumultuous  
peal;

They are a rampart round the pylon rent  
asunder

From the mainland by the might of yonder  
waves that steal

Slowly and surely in from where they roar  
in the distance;

I hasten over the sand that paves the lonely  
court,

Pass through the giant pylon, and with a  
swift insistence

Climb rocks in front of the cave that is the  
Sea's resort.

Only He for awhile hath left His grand  
Sea-palace,

And I may enter, daring for a moment to  
explore,

Until anon beneath the Titan arch He dallies,  
Ere He arrive to play with the boulders on  
the floor;

Arch He hath hewn for Himself in scorn  
of our rondure of arches,

Tall, irregular, huge, in outline lightning-  
forked,

While day and night He moved in four great  
moon-led marches,

And mouths of the foaming surge with the  
hollow mountain talked.

Was not the Architect Chaos? the storm's  
abraded edges,

Gloom-model after which He set Himself  
to mould,

Or the journeying billows' beetling, mountain-  
rupturing ridges?

Old Chaos hath a genius primeval, vast and  
bold,

Who tints the windy walls with dim red  
rust, and gold!

“When the Main is here at home his lucid  
halls are paven

With a foamy-veined, and shifting shadowed  
emerald;

When he leaves, the ponderous purple  
boulders are engraven

With fairy tales of the water by the mighty  
scald.

I bathe and wade in the pools, rich-wrought  
with flowers of the ocean,

Or over the yellow sand run swift to meet  
the sea,

Dive under the falls of foam, or float on a  
weariless motion

Of the alive, clear wave, heaving undulant  
under me!

The grey gull wails aloft; he floats on the  
breast of the billow,

And a wet seal flounders flippered on a shelf  
of the cave;

He knows well I'll not hurt him, brother of  
mine, dear fellow;

His mild brown eye beholds confidingly and  
suave.

Yonder the mouth of the dark long sub-  
terranean hollow,

Where with a light in my hat I drove the  
birds one day,

Who seeing the narrowing end, and a  
swimmer persistently follow,

Dived unexpectedly under, and rose up far  
away!

“But the cavern hath awful tones, dull  
crimson hues of the henbane,

Blood-red, as ancient Murder had been  
hiding here,

So old and unremembered, gory tints of the  
den wane:

Nay, for a smell of slaughter haunts the  
antres drear!

I will not remember, I thought! forget by  
the brine that I love so

All the terror of humans in that made me grieve!  
Ah! refreshed for a moment, how may I  
hope to remove so

From the wrongs of those, my brethren?  
'tis but a brief reprieve!

I deem some Horror hides in yonder gloom  
 of the hollows,  
 The surge returns to glut them somewhere  
 near my lair ;  
 And while the sullen sound my lone ear  
 gloomily follows,  
 With some foreboding cold to gaze around  
 I dare.  
 Oh! what are these at my feet? Ship-  
 timbers, masts that are shattered,  
 In the howl of the hurricane, crunched on  
 the iron of rocks—  
 And lo! 'tis a corpse in the corner, swollen,  
 sodden, and battered,  
 Nodding, and tossing its arms with the swirl  
 against the blocks!  
 For the Sea hath returned already, He enters  
 the outermost portal ;  
 Let a man begone, or drown, by the crag-  
 walled vestibule ;  
 Let him begone, or drown, by the echoing  
 vestibule!  
 Ah! 'tis the corpse of a boy there—hear the  
 wail of a mortal  
 Who weeps by a fire in a far land, and waits  
 for her beautiful!  
 The Sea hath returned already ; He laughs  
 in the outermost portal ;  
 He washeth over the boulders, thundering  
 to and fro!  
 Who are they that inhabit here aloof from  
 the mortal?  
 What awful Powers, indifferent to human  
 joy or woe?  
 Of Demiurgic Powers, afar from the man  
 and the woman,  
 Are these dim echoing chambers the mystical  
 veiled thought,  
 Indifferent, aloof, or enemy to the human? . . .  
 How, then, are they a haven for minds and  
 hearts o'erwrought?  
 Ah! many and many an hour in your sub-  
 lime communion  
 I pass, O gods unknown, of ocean, wind,  
 and cloud ;  
 I find profound repose, refreshment flow  
 from the union . . .  
 Yet, O my soul, divorce no sufferers in the  
 crowd!

Nay, for I hear in the air that pestilence of  
 the voices—  
 And it is not all the gale, nor cry of the  
 wild sea-mew !  
 ' Say what sinister joy, not man's this time,  
 rejoices,  
 The loud, shipwrecking, murderous tempest-  
 whirl to brew?' . . .

"Anon was changed the spirit of my dream.

## CANTO II.—MISFORTUNE—ADVOCATUS DIABOLI—MAD MOTHER

"How the sunlights quiver  
 Upon the river,  
 Flash out, are lost,  
 On wavelets tost !  
 Trees in ranks  
 On verdant banks  
 Trail their leaves  
 Where water heaves ;  
 A boat is nearing  
 A mossy strand,  
 Young voices cheering  
 Are heard from land ;  
 Musical bells  
 Of a village steeple  
 Flood hills and dells ;  
 And a village people  
 In bright array  
 Await the young,  
 This morning gay,  
 Whose happy throng,  
 All pure and white,  
 With smiles of light,  
 In happy union,  
 For a first communion  
 Sail over the river.  
 Where sunlights quiver,  
 From vineyard-nested,  
 Calm, hill-crested  
 Hamlets fair  
 In bloomy air,  
 On the other side  
 Of the rippling tide.  
 The saintly father,  
 While they gather

Before the altar,  
Well-nigh will falter  
From fond emotion,  
And heart's devotion ;  
Will give the feast  
To elder and least,  
The while they falter  
Before the altar,  
Fair heads bent low,  
Young hearts aglow ;  
To the gentle Saviour  
All life's behaviour  
Commending humbly,  
And praying dumbly  
That He will guide  
O'er life's wild tide  
To the other side.  
They are singing glees, they  
Merrily dally,  
Songs on the breeze  
Float into the valley,  
While bells are ringing  
Musically,  
White sail winging  
Over the wave,  
They laugh at the grave  
Boatman wan,  
Or a doubled swan ;  
At a fleck of froth,  
Or a drowning moth,  
Their mirth flows on ;  
Youth's fount of mirth  
Hath a holy birth  
From naught, from all,  
From great and small,  
Perennial! . . .

" But one who watched the bark that brought  
Her child athwart the flood  
Bent eyes a moment, while she sought  
A favourite flower or bud,  
To adorn the bosom of her daughter  
Against the holy rite ;  
And when she raised them to the water,  
No vessel was in sight! . . .  
Only a weltering dark mass  
Upon the blaze abhorrent ;  
The youth that played on summer glass,  
Death-gript now in the current !

Whether a sudden squall had caught  
The bellying full sail,  
Or crowding to one side had wrought  
Collapse, and that wild wail,  
I know not, but their joy became  
One agony and terror !  
While we may lay no more the blame  
On human crime and error !  
A moment since, their beauty dallied,  
The dew of youth upon them ;  
Then gasping, panic-struck, and pallid,  
A cruel Fate fell on them !  
The shadow of holy mysteries  
Within the temple nigh,  
Mellowing joy within their eyes ;  
And yet they were to die !  
Shrieking for mercy, help, they drown  
In anguished Love's full sight ;  
So Heaven sends the blessing down,  
Our pleading prayers invite! . . .

" And now I hear the chuckling hiss,  
' This is their first communion—this !  
See the pretty white young faces !  
These the All-Father's fond embraces !  
Will you arraign mankind if these succumb,  
Or old Dame Nature, who is blind and  
dumb? . . .

" Visit again with me the London garret !  
Two parents, and five children have to  
share it :  
Virtue, shame, modesty, may seldom come  
To those who litter in this pleasant home ;  
But slow starvation always ; trade is dull ;  
Work hard to find ; live skeleton and skull,  
With sallow skin stretched over, youth is here ;  
Old sacks for bedding, and how soon the bier !  
One friend insidious in the squalid sty  
Leers—the gin-flask ! What other friend is  
nigh ?  
But if to alleviate their want you fret,  
Be sure grim Doom will circumvent you yet !

" Or come and note small children at the  
show,  
Who watch intent the mummers to and  
fro! . . .

"Fire! fire!" we yell! See, see how panic  
flies,  
Until the ways are choked with mad atrocities,  
Well-nigh more murderous even than the  
human,  
Almost too cynical for very man or woman!  
Heaped and piled,  
With agonies contorted wild,  
Of many an innocent little child!"

"Then did they show me other dreadful  
scenes—  
The dull blind tyrant, with his myrmidons,  
Who stalks, and slays his nobler brother  
beast,  
Warning off man, child, woman, blest with  
vision,  
From God's fair mountainside, His gift to all.  
Let him beware! red Revolution waits!  
Ah! fertile lands depopulate for game,  
The charred and ruined hamlet on the waste!  
Where once throve happy families there  
skulks  
Tyrannous Murder's blackened face; there  
struts  
Decorous Infamy, close-masked in Law,  
The gentleman evictor, who evicts  
The dying babe, and its heart-broken mother,  
With choked sob praying shelter for her  
child!  
He spurns her, fires the sheltering hut; they  
wander,  
Aimlessly wander up the bleak hillside,  
Some wailing, some with vacant stare, and  
some  
A silent curse in their wrecked hearts. . . .  
Behold!  
Upon the torrid sands of Africa  
Innumerable bones of spent black slave,  
Starved, buried quick, knifed, mutilated,  
goaded  
By callous driver, women, children, men! . . .

"I hope you like our pretty magic slides;  
Earth is, in sooth, a very lively scene!  
A water-drop beneath the microscope,  
Where loathsome animalcules gorge and war;  
One huge disordered order, shrewdly planned

For subtlest ingenuities of pain!  
Well, and so we laugh one long laugh the  
more!  
Grim Chance runs riot, drunken conqueror;  
He reels athwart the world's dim battle-  
fields;  
Purple his robe; a dripping sword he wields,  
While his pale horse's flanks are splashed  
with blood,  
Gorged vultures flapping round him; earth  
is one red flood.  
And for what priests tell of a wrathful God,  
Avenging ancient guilt, bale-fires like this  
Accumulate more gloom in the abyss!" . . .

"(Anon was changed the dark dream-  
imagery.)

#### MAD MOTHER

"After moonrise in autumn,  
By a wandering water,  
When a half-muffled moon,  
Dazed in a cloudland  
Of wandering grey,  
Looked pale from the cloud,  
Dim branches uncoloured,  
In a line with the moon,  
Under, over the moon,  
Faintly repeated,  
A dark woven lacework  
In the wan wave . . .  
I heard a low singing,  
Thin, shadowy singing,  
Unwordable woe,  
A wail from the ruin  
Of a heart desolated,  
A mind out of tune,  
As a wail from the wind:  
A thin faded form by the pale flying  
moon,  
A face with the youth faded out from  
the eyes,  
From the wan, weary eyes;  
Save for her, not a soul!  
Save for her, and a child,  
Whom she held by the hand,  
In the shadowy silence;  
But she ceaseth her singing,

Low saith to the child—  
 'Come along, dear, with mammy  
 Under the water,  
 The soft flying water,  
 The sheltering water,  
 The kind, hiding water ;  
 You are going with me !'  
 Then they went from the shelving  
 Low shore together  
 Into the water :  
 And the child little knew  
 Where he was going,  
 Only clung to the mother,  
 Deeming her wise.  
 Was she not ever  
 Wise for her little one,  
 Love for her little one ?  
 Yea, Love is wise !  
 Ah ! she was true ;  
 But the woes of the world,  
 Driven home by the devil,  
 Had maddened her mind,  
 And the child little knew,  
 Knew not the mother  
 Herself little knew,  
 Even she, even she  
 Herself little knew !  
 So they went in together,  
 Mother and child,  
 Awaking the cloudland  
 In the wan water,  
 Awaking the moon.  
 'O mammy, how cold it is !'  
 'Yea, very cold, dear !  
 Only 'tis colder  
 Yonder on earth, love,  
 Yonder on land !'  
 A gurgle, a silence,  
 Low wind in the rushes,  
 Never note more of song now ;  
 Nor mother, nor child knew ;  
 Ah ! none of us know !

## CANTO III.—SATAN

"Now again in the dreary blear-eyed room,  
 Where the poor boy lay murdered on the  
 floor,  
 I find me ; and that white heap lies there yet,

On naked boards, life-crimsoned ; a thin fog  
 Of London fouls the atmosphere ; the pane  
 Only reveals red tile roof, and soiled chimney,  
 Through shivered, grimed glass ; in the room  
 is more  
 Now than one body ; cold upon her pallet  
 Lay the dead maiden whom they starved ;  
 and through  
 The door half-open I behold the child  
 Flit up and down, with those two heavy  
 irons  
 Dragging at skeleton arms ; while yonder  
 stark  
 In that dim corner stares a small drowned  
 corse.  
 Loathly, unclean accouplements in air  
 Take hinted shape phantasmal, or withdraw,  
 Amid the muttering of wicked words.

"I feel death-chilled from some strange,  
 ghostly air,  
 And vital power drawn from me ; then rushed  
 A supernatural Wind of ample pinion,  
 That swooped, and wailed, and fell ; the  
 affrighted chamber  
 Shuddered : I was aware of a dread Presence.  
 It seemed a pale mist nourished on my life,  
 Deadly miasm exhaling from my body,  
 Trailing now convolutions serpentine  
 Upon the floor ; a monster parasite,  
 It thickened, coiled voluminous ; and then  
 Rose solid, palpable, huge dragon train,  
 Towering high till it assumed a crest,  
 Human, yet half inhuman ; now it wavered,  
 As though in act to threaten with a fang.  
 All the dull-white showed clots of blood in it ;  
 I deem them mine ; and yet the Thing  
 appeared  
 Very embodied soul of the vile scene,  
 Of all the loathly outer circumstance :  
 Whose human visage, livid like grim death,  
 Whose vampire visage, monster life-in-death,  
 Fascinates with an evil-glittering eye.

"And still a grandeur outraged and defiled  
 Sat throned upon the ruin-countenance,  
 On the large god-front, broadly reared and  
 high,

Like some pale crag, some temple wall,  
 shagged over  
 With thickets of dull hair; on loose lewd  
 lips  
 Dwelt Cruelty, Pride, arrogant Disdain,  
 While hard Hate glared from cavernous green  
 eyes,  
 Unchallenged owner, with immense Despair;  
 Save when some lurid Passion smouldered  
 sullen,  
 Or flared infernal; yet withal in them,  
 As on the haggard, marred, and wasted  
 cheek,  
 There reigned so absolute a desolation,  
 That Pity rose upon the night of Fear  
 And Horror, like a timid trembling star,  
 Venturing even here with her faint ray—  
 Now It assumed the guise of a well-dressed,  
 And cynic-sneering modern gentleman.

“None could have told the age of the  
 dread Thing—

It might have been or very old, or young—  
 Whose haunting set grey face  
 Is all one blight, and pregnant with decay. . . .  
 I can but grovel, cower underneath,  
 Spell-bound by this, more dire than the  
 Anaconda.

What is it? Cain, the murderer, the rebel?  
 Or legendary wanderer. Ahasuerus?  
 Or that Medusa fury’s Gorgon-head?  
 Ahriman, Satan, Mephistopheles,  
 Arch-critic, nourished on belittlement—  
 Malign joy strength accords to impotence—  
 Or some projection of the worst in me,  
 Horribly thriven at a soul’s expense?

“I hear it breathe in tones sepulchral, low.  
 Some heart-o’erwhelming knolling of a knell,  
 Which maddeneth, like that torture of the  
 drop  
 In mediæval dungeons on the crown!  
 Now loud with heart-cleft anguish, and  
 despair,  
 Syllables poignant with the wind’s wild wail;  
 Charged now with hollow mockery and gibe,  
 Thin, ringing false, blood-curdling, half a  
 hiss.

Every malignant word deprived of strength,  
 Drew life forth, slow blood from the gladiator,  
 And fell like clods upon a coffin-lid.  
 I felt as though some fungus of the charnel  
 Were growing over my dim, withered heart.

“You shall not have your child for all  
 your pother,  
 For he is well extinguished; so are these—  
 The happy children a fair accident,  
 And these an uglier—thus you say they seem  
 To you—yet they’re congenial enough  
 To other folk—proverbially tastes differ!  
 Your vice may relish what their virtue  
 frowns at,  
 The while your bridling virtue scorns their  
 vice.  
 There is no right, nor wrong, nor heart in  
 Nature!

She suffocates the miner in the mine;  
 Earth yawns to swallow honest labour,  
 tombed

Among the fallen stones of his poor home,  
 Slowly to starve there, inaccessible.  
 She shakes his roof down upon masquing  
 Mirth,

And gaily-tripping Innocence, but dumb  
 And stolid stands, accomplice of a crime.  
 Who hurls the panic-stricken freight of men,  
 So roused from slumber, trapped in their  
 own trains,  
 From high-built viaducts, their own proud  
 work,

Ablaze, one shrieking, dizzying chaos down  
 To iron-bound winter water, which denies  
 A drop to quench the fierce flame, that  
 devours

At leisure victims, caged behind strong bars,  
 Themselves devised to guard from mis-  
 adventure!

Convulsed with mirth at her grim irony,  
 Look how she glowers over them, and grins!

“What more? the time would fail me,  
 should I summon  
 All my great cloud of witnesses for evil!  
 She grinds together huge ships in mid-ocean,  
 Mere brittle shells in Her portentous grasp,

Holds puny, pale crews drenched in cold  
suspense

Over the maws of ravening wave-furies,  
That pluck and hiss at them, and show white  
teeth,

Where lurks the foul shark, ere she drops  
them in—

Maddens in open boats, until they pray—  
Yes! pray to God—then prey on one  
another!—

Sun-smitten and delirious, after draughts  
Of tantalising brine from the false water. . .

“Huge ship dismantled, staggering to her  
doom,

While the loud surge sweeps over her  
drenched decks!

A man is lashed to the helm; the rest are  
sealed,

And battened down beneath, shut in with  
Horror,

To madden, rend one another, stifle, drown,  
Rats in a hole; whose screams and wails  
appeal

To ravening wind, and wildly hounded  
cloud!

One plunge! one last loud shriek caught  
away by the blast,

Mangled, mocked, sucked into its mastering  
roar,

And consubstantiate with senseless Sound!  
Dominant, blind black Vortex whirls, rolls,  
rages,

And brief-lived bubbles float in place of  
men!—

Dive to the deeps! there shapes of the well-  
loved

Drift heaped, stiff, festered, eaten of mon-  
strous things! . . .

She decimates with cancer, and long pangs  
On your sick beds ashore: O Tamburlaine,  
Caligula, Tiberius, De Sade,

Well may you droop your shamefast eyes,  
and kneel

Before your Queen, your Mistress crowned  
with crime,

Avowing how She dwarfs imagination  
With hell-born ingenuities of wrong!

“Did God appoint the infant-murdering  
woman,

Who slowly starves, and rots with foul  
disease,

Through filth, stench, long neglect, cold  
cruelty,

Pale, pleading babes, she undertook to  
cherish,

Presiding genius of the baby-farm,  
Vampire, that sucks the blood of innocence?

Or did He make her heart, who does to  
death

Her own child, for some base insurance fee,  
Which she will pour fire-molten down her  
throat?—

Or doth this brittle, poor potter's clay defy  
Him?

Our confraternity applaud such deeds!

But God! Even I dare not so frantically

Blaspheme as charge such petty crimes on  
God!

If He commanded, then Myself am He.

And if permitted, He is Impotence.

Choose, man, your horn! or else, renounce  
your God!

“Or will you, in sooth, sophisticate your  
souls

By arguing Wrong mere roundabout, masked  
Right?

Well! you are more mine for the specious  
lie! . . .

If there's a God, I never met with Him.

The emaciate, cruel-eyed inquisitor,

And soldiers fanatic drenched earth with  
blood,

Oppressed the unconscious air with human  
woe,

In that dread Name! and who were glad  
but we?

“There is no right, no wrong, no heart in  
Nature:

Your right and wrong are rules for your own  
order,

Rules variable, moreover, and unsure.

Nay, virtue is but idiosyncrasies,

Similar, close-knit, long-inherited,

Thrust upon others, under penalty.  
Provide for your own order how ye may,  
Great Nature careth but a little for it!  
Nay, but She made your order? Well, 'tis true.

Yet if you lean on her, you'll find a whore,  
Fickle of humour, fancying one to-day,  
And much preferring another by to-morrow.  
Her rough-hewn plans jostle at cross-purposes,

Malformed brats, fighting as they leave the womb.

She shouldereth you unceremoniously  
Aside in blundering on her big blind way,  
And trampleth on the writhing hearts she whelped.

Hers the volcanoes, hers the foodful fields  
They devastate; who brings to birth fair children,

And loathly monsters, with the same set smile,

Vacuous, impartial; now the Fury yields  
Storm, Earthquake, Pestilence, now Human-thonged

Red scourges, Tyranny, or Revolution,  
Lust, Murder; yet she neither bans nor blesses;

For Mind informs not the Automaton;  
One huge, impassive Immobility,  
A Block, to whom Delirium lends gesture.

“Hers two colossal faces, and dread names,  
Anarchy-Order, Order-Anarchy:  
She alternateth both *ad libitum*;  
(Her seesaw is a trifle wearisome!)

“Whom she engendereth, shall she not destroy?  
Sole Fountain she of Honour and Dishonour;  
Absolute Sovereign, she may apportion either.  
Who are you that arraign her? Pray, whine, whimper!

But, fool! do you suppose that she can hear?  
Who wearieeth more of babes and population  
Than any murdering mother of you all,  
Whom she inspireth in her irony  
To emulate her royalty of wrong.

#### DETERIORATION.—I

“I commend to you the ethics of deterioration.

A genius, a temperament of fire,  
Weighted with the dead weight of ancestral sin!

Pegasus turning a mill-wheel,  
While his white wings wave, longing for the ether!

Yet even Pegasus cannot feed on air.  
The portals of sense were closely barred  
Against the entrance of any lovely vision,  
Barred against fair imagery from the world,  
Though the man was gifted with all sensibility.

Prepared in the stately temple of his spirit  
Were niches for carven gods innumerable,  
Who would have made it beautiful as a dream.

These by the Architect in irony,  
These was it forbidden to fill in:  
Night formless suffused the ample spaces;  
For the Builder had left the windows blind.  
Within were all appointments for ritual,  
Yet neither wrought gold, embroidered fabric,  
nor pure white lily

Might ever be conveyed thither from without;  
And so the temple rites were maimed:  
Although friendly voices from the darkness,  
Kindly accents of comrades, were fain to cheer him;

Yea, the voice of his well-beloved spake to him.

But one morning he addressed her,  
Her blind lover addressed her,  
With fond playfulness, as was his wont,  
And there came no answer;  
So he leaned foreboding hands to feel for her,  
To feel for her in her accustomed place,  
Half hoping and believing she might be in play,

Because the alternative were too tremendous for endurance.

But her face was clay-cold when he touched it,  
His consolation was clay-cold,  
Who might have redeemed his soul!  
A little later, the voices of companions,

One by one, were put to silence ;  
As lamps may be extinguished after service ;  
Until around the solitary inmate  
Reigned one immensity of desolation.

“Then awoke the House-Curse of the family,

From where it slept in the dim crypt,  
Feigning a mortal slumber ;  
It waited only for opportunity.  
Now the Fury sprang upon him,  
Seized him in his mortal weakness,  
In the lone hour of his despair,  
Gripped him in relentless talon ;  
Till he, weary of unendurable  
Life, yielded him to temptation,  
Delivered himself over to fatal vice,  
With unnatural lust wooing even Annihilation.  
Then fell the fair temple, tottering to ruin.

“Have you ever watched a drowning thing in the water—

A little animal thrown into it by rough hands?  
For a moment it struggles in mortal anguish ;  
But stone upon stone, well-aimed,  
Sinks it with reiterated blows,  
Mangled and choking, under the flood. . . .  
Who weighted with ancestral ruin the feeble soul?

Who flung it in sunless gulfs to drown,  
Stoning it with misfortune upon misfortune? . . .

But “*credo quia impossibile*,”

I may boast, has never been my motto!

“Hast thou observed my servant Job?”

I think I may answer that I have observed him often.

And such was the conclusion at which he arrived.

So I leave you to conclude what was mine. . . .  
Regard but the seething swarms of your huge cities!

Steeped in muddy environments from their birth up,

The stagnant sewer of whose blood is one corruption,

Dull reptiles nourished in congenial slime.

If there were another life beyond the grave,  
These would enter it under favourable auspices!

“Lo! the blithe squirrel, with its nested young,

Who plays among lit laughter of young leaves,  
His stored nuts of the forest lying near,  
Suddenly troubled!—he descends the boughs,  
Feebly resisting: at the caverned trunk  
Arrived, there glare fixed eyes of a stark snake,

Ringed, mailed, fierce lusting for its proper prey,

Waiting him in the hollow: look! he leaps,  
Death-doomed and dazed, into red-gulfing jaws,

Inevitable—type of your free-will!

Example of the kindness of your gods!

And their beneficent contrivance! fie!

What “good” can Horror do this animal?

What “moral gain” to him in lingering torture,

Or long, excruciating agony?

Glad life grows out of, feeds on, painful death . . .

Such the essential structure of the work  
Omnipotent Benevolence devised!

“These slaughters, and that roasting of a mother

By her own children for a paltry hoard,  
Over a slow fire! yawnings of hell-fire,  
Flame-flaps to show the furious furnace under—

A boy of eight, her grandson, told the tale—

What admirable nurture your good gods

Provide for their young charges, to be sure!

Old Priestcraft did this family much good!

Priestridden, Agnostic, ye are all one Death;

Your Calvinist was right at least in that.

“Some are born devil, and some saint, they say,

While some born devil seem to turn to saint.  
All by material necessity!

A brain secretes the virtue, and the vice,

Which, decomposing, can secrete no more.

And blood-disease, or blows upon the head,

Convert the sage saint back to a mad sinner,

For all's laborious goodness, built with pain—  
That's a “conversion”; only upside down!

Nay, I've known many a hale old man  
"converted"

In such a wise, and cursing his pure youth;  
Joseph regrets that wife of Potiphar,  
And rails on the prim boyhood, which refused  
her,

Because he'll never get another chance.  
The drivelling babe returns in the old dotard,  
Fool's babble of man relapsing to the silence,  
Whence it emerged so very uselessly.  
Cease, vain curvetting Virtue! you who dance  
As you are wound by the fool, Circumstance!

"The use of suffering! use of fiddlesticks!  
See yon blasphemer harden under it!  
And when primeval Chaos comes again,  
The old Abyss remains indifferent.  
If it's a comfort, pray to the deaf Silence!  
But understand, it can't so much as grin,  
To mock your prayer. And for your "wise,"  
"good" men,

Who, fumbling at old knots, entangle more,  
Who, wrangling, only pour oil on hot hate,  
These are but bigger animalcules; all  
Your little noise will cease at the last cold.  
The Deep once dreamed a nightmare of  
abortions,

The Tragi-comedy of Human kind;  
And when It woke, misshapen shadows fled;  
I pray God to avert another, like it!

"Why did you leave your old glad gods?  
For now  
They lie dead; yea, and younger gods lie dead.  
Why stayed ye not with Bacchus and his  
crew?

Remains for worship iron-bound blind Law.  
Ye move now in a dim, dun, dismal world  
Of listless Wealth, of lean, monotonous Toil,  
One bone between her savage and starved  
sons,  
Snarling and tearing madly for one bone,  
Who make the earth that groans beneath  
red shambles.

"There is no life for you beyond the grave,  
No, nor redress, nor hope for these dead  
children.

Why crush your heart against the Inevitable?  
Nay, rather, sip your pleasure—gulp your  
bliss—

Get all you can! enjoy it while you may!  
Or if you say you may not relish joy,  
Because it tastes of alien suffering,  
As though some tears had dropped into the  
cup,  
Then die! die now! Repose is with the  
dead.

They have a monopoly of that!  
And thank your stars, poor men, that ye are  
mortal!

What direr curse than immortality?  
Than immortality without a God?

Alas! alas! . . .

Ha! what am I, then, who now talk with  
you? . . .

Why, a phantasm of your disordered brain! . . .  
Mad! are you? . . . wish you may indeed  
go mad!

In such a world 'tis better to be mad.  
Lie down with this cold clay you say you  
love—

What if some like their cuddles cold, some  
hot?

"Old age, the shadowy vestibule of Death,  
Long, chill, pale cloister, over-roofed with  
yea,

Looms lone and dreary; Death awaits you  
all,

To still your tired hearts for you; then  
die!

Cut short the long unfriended road; die  
now!

Ye dawned at early morning from the Abyss;  
Now it is evening; fade, and cease therein!  
And learn, man! one dread name of mine,  
Despair,

Most formidable name of all the names  
Men call me by!—more life but means more  
pain.

Then why live?

That inner burden which you deem your sin  
Weights heavier, ever more intolerable,  
Weights you to earth, yea, drags you down  
to hell.

“*You* cannot carry it with jaunty step,  
Or light heart, nor yet leave behind—how  
cure

The monstrous cancer of your own bad blood,  
Anger, and lust, and vanity, and pride?  
Repentance? Had I any laughter left  
I'd keep it all for that! Repent! To-morrow  
You'll sin anew, and more yet! Will remorse,  
Were it sincere, undo the harm you did  
To those weak souls, whom you dared feign  
to *love*? . . .

“Ye are but attitudinising apes,  
With all your airs of penitence, reform! . . .  
Why scold your fellows? hypocrite, look  
nearer!

You, the potential murderer of these!  
You, their corrupter! . . . die, for very  
shame,

Before you inflict worse injury! Begone!  
Why seek not now the cold breast of your  
mother? . . .

I mean the Abyss, your mother, fool! to rest  
There from more conflict, effort, vain en-  
deavour,

Even as they? . . . So very still they lie . . .  
Behold their slumber!—that is sleep in-  
deed. . . .

Your child, your mother, summon you  
away. . . .

What! don't you recognise the sainted  
tones? . . .

Nothing is certain, save confusion . . .  
go! . . .

Fall down, and worship . . . in me behold  
your god!

I, cowering underneath the awful eyes,  
Regarding, fascinated, the dread Face,  
Whose stony cold invades my own chill  
heart,

Beheld therein, with more supreme dismay,  
The same dire Visage, which confronted  
mine

Erst in my lonely thought, when insolent  
I dared adjure great Isis to unveil,  
And, for reward, beheld the countenance,  
The rigid countenance of Death, that wore  
Malign, set scowl of supernatural Hate. . . .

Methought this loomed more large, till it  
usurped

All space, and claimed to be the Universe—  
Our flimsy decent coverings withdrawn,  
Withdrawn at last. . . . ‘Now, am I fair?’  
it breathed

In hoarse, low mocking tones . . . and lo!  
this seemed

Mine own face, dead. . . . Thrust down, I  
reeled, and fell . . .

Yet clutched at somewhat in the jaws of  
hell . . .

Yea, nerved my spirit with one last wild cry  
For one last wrestle with the enemy. . . .

A Voice spake in me; yea, mine own heart  
spoke.

Ah! but it sounded like his, who forsook  
Our darkling path in that far-off drear night  
Of winter! and yet I cried out for light! . . .

## BOOK VI.—ORDER

“AERIAL walls of our wide world,  
Built round my heart, a stifling tomb,  
I would ye were asunder hurled,  
And yielded me a little room!

Yon ample air-dome of our world  
Weighs on me like the ponderous lead,  
As in a nailed-down coffin curled  
I cower, alive, alas! not dead!

For if my lambs must suffer so,  
Fall on me, pillars of great Earth!  
Or let me breathe, O let me go

Where I may find for these new birth,  
The wronged full-vindicated, blest,  
And justice for the poor oppressed! . . .

The Heart disdains your message of the sense,  
Demands the triumph of wronged innocence,  
Demands to break up all the starry roof,

To rend and burn through yon ethereal woof,  
Claimeth to breathe in a Diviner day,  
Where all her winter buds will find their  
May.

Ah! what inspireth faith, and hope sublime,  
If not One throned above your space and  
time?

Gleams in the cloudy darkness of His feet,  
 Who, crowned with stars, hath sent the  
     Paraclete,  
 Dim, weary wanderings of our path to meet !  
 What ! if ambition, pride, lust, all my sin  
 Drag me from that high festival within !  
 Albeit I may never find the Grail,  
 Yet will I testify, before I fail,  
 Though from afar, like Balaam, all is well  
 With God's own little ones, with Israel—  
 Yea, for Sandalphon waits on the high stair,  
 Ushering to Heaven every humble prayer ;  
 While Jesus, Mary, rise to lead them there.

## CANTO I.—HEAVEN

“ Then burst asunder prison bars,  
 Men name earth, ocean, air, or stars !  
 So to my inner sense revealed  
 A world their glory but concealed.  
 Like a pageantry of cloud,  
 Or enchantment disavowed,  
 Vanished, and were rolled away,  
 As a dream at dawn of day !  
 Laughing children, all in play,  
 Round one another veering flew,  
 Swift, dallying swallows in the blue,  
 While the pulse of their white wings  
 Made audible soft winnowings,  
 In many a threefold flower-cluster  
 Dewy-eyed, a pure white lustre,  
 Delicate shadow falling fast  
 From each on either as they passed. . . .  
 Joy ! I knew them for the same,  
 Emerged from purgatorial flame !  
 Surely there I see the boy  
 One killed because he bought the toy,  
 And there the spectre-child, whose arms  
 The cruel double iron harms ;  
 (Ever up and down the stair !  
 Nor Madness snatched him from Despair !)  
 These the little ones who starved ;  
 One all unheeded, while they carved  
 Under her their toothsome meats ;  
 These whom the hungry fire eats ;  
 Yonder those hell-lust hath mangled ;  
 And whom God's laughing water strangled :

The Holy Innocents ! are they  
 In God's garden here at play ?  
 Lo ! my little one among them !  
 Many lovely flowers he flung them !  
 Where are, then, the scald, the scar,  
 That may their beauty-marvel mar ?  
 All unremembered, transitory !  
 Yet a richer, rarer glory  
 It was theirs indeed to gain  
 From their crucibles of pain ;  
 From the bruising of the stone  
 A myriadfold the rainbow shone.  
 Starry gleams are in their eyes,  
 Lighted by no cloudless day,  
 A glory-glow of sacrifice,  
 Born of night, and pale dismay ;  
 A world of stars, a milky way !  
 Every child a Christ as well,  
 A Holy Babe of Raffaele.  
 Are they dew in their soft hair,  
 The laughing irises at play ?  
 No, wild whirled wheels that never spare,  
 Like fierce attritions of despair,  
 Ground the diamond to spray,  
 For tendril locks a laughing light !  
 Red roses on their flower-white  
 Have fervent hues of human blood ;  
 Nor are they born of only light ;  
 Mother Earth, her lowly wood,  
 Fed them, our grey rain for food.

“ Then, with a fountain's delicate rain noises  
 (A silver moss leaps plashing where it poises),  
 I heard afar melodious young tones  
 Of children, warbling limpid antiphons,  
 Of singing children, sister answering brother,  
 And flying, flying after one another.

## FOUNTAIN SONG

- First.* “ ‘ Where is the rainbow ?  
     Where may I find it ? ’  
*Second.* ‘ In a fountain falling  
     With the sun behind it ! ’  
*First.* ‘ Where the flying silver  
     Falls loose, dishevelled ? ’  
*Second.* ‘ At an airier fountain  
     Your look be levelled !—

Where gems enhancing  
Aerial blue,  
Are glimmering, glancing,  
A delicate dew !

*First.* 'Come you, and show !  
I never shall find !'

*Second.* 'Wait till he blow !  
Ah ! whims of the wind !'

*First.* 'Silent in airy dew  
Playfully wafted,  
Rainbow, the fairy, flew  
Swift from the shafted  
Watery column !  
He will beguile  
Old over-solemn  
Faces to smile !'

*Second.* 'Here, over the leafage  
Glowing to golden,  
Not for a moment  
Will he be holden ;  
A glamour of glory  
Over the trees !  
Ever murmuring story,  
Low melodies !'

*First.* 'Now he is laving  
Clear in the pool !  
Wavelets are waving  
Delicate, cool !  
He is all azure,  
Purple and yellow,  
Following pleasure,  
Beautiful fellow !  
Awhile appearing,  
Now here, now there !  
Vanishing, veering,  
A Glendoveer !  
Everywhere !'

*Second.* 'A bird who is washing  
In a waterlily bath  
A very fine flashing  
Leaf-laver hath !  
The young jet of joyance,  
Clear with no colour,  
Will yield all her buoyance  
In a ruffling corolla,  
Fall, a resolving  
Soft silvery flower,  
Woven water involving

Heaven-hues in a shower !  
Deliciously dying is  
Dear as the fleet  
Swift thrill of flying  
Moming to meet !'

## CANTO II.—HEAVEN'S MINISTRY

"Then one of the fair flower-band  
Led me gently by the hand :  
Had I to choose among them all,  
On him alone my heart would call !  
Yet by my grief I was aware  
Once more of our terrestrial air,  
Of pestilential dens, where those  
Grim horrors litter and repose.  
I murmur 'Love ! need we return below ?'  
'In heaven I am unhappy while I know  
My playfellows in earth-life weeping so !  
Ah ! when your anguished little ones are going,  
We illumine their way with gentle angel-glowing,  
We tender visions of serene repose,  
Havens from the weeping and the blows,  
Hued like the rose,  
Where a healing fountain flows !  
Your mortal mind may never paint  
All Love doth for them, when they faint ;  
You divine not, you are blind,  
Angel anodynes behind  
Those outer agonies of dying ;  
We wait invisible to soothe the sighing,  
Till we may bear your ruffled birdlings home,  
Where never hawk may come !  
Poor earthbound eyes are native to the night,  
Unapt to bear the dazzle of our light,  
Familiar only with the realms of death,  
Where many a formidable form drew breath ;  
You only saw and heard the fiend ;  
None of our cadences, who weaned  
Your children from the breast of earth,  
And fed with food of heavenly birth !  
Yea, and we will arouse in very death,  
That battens vampire-like on blood and breath,  
A pang of life-revival, a faint qualm  
Disturbing to the horrible cold calm  
Of carrion conscience ; till it burn remorse,  
Under the hot accumulating force

Of righteous indignation breathed thereon,  
 Until for these, these even, be well-won  
 Saving damnation of the fiercest hell;  
 Heaven's own dread dawn, for all your bigots  
 tell!"

### CANTO III.—FAITH

"Humbly I heard him, fair as morning-tide,  
 Whose high humility love-lore supplied.

"The future generations of such men  
 Will marvel at what little moved them then.  
 Behold the gloom that hides the morrow  
 parts;

And lo! well-tended homes, and kindlier  
 hearts!

These evil natures, wandering astray,  
 Have only arrived less far upon their way;  
 And they must pass where they are passing  
 now,

That through them world-experience may  
 grow.

The Lord transmuteth leaden ill to gold  
 With all-compelling alchemies untold;  
 Æonial fire will melt the hardest stone;  
 By wave-persistence cliffs lie overthrown;  
 Through weathering circumstance high hills  
 are gone.

"What! were you frightened with your own  
 thin shadow

Adown the lawn, flower-illumined meadow,  
 Poor timid doe,

As you ran below?

Distortions of your short and feeble sight,  
 Calumniating our fair sons of light!

You feared grim idols your own mind had  
 wrought,

Confusions of a miscreating thought,  
 Feared you yourselves would all dissolve and  
 fade

In Time and space, which ye yourselves have  
 made?

Mere images phantastical of the mind,  
 Who knows but shadows of true things  
 behind!

Nay! for the soul is mistress, and not slave!  
 Let her assume dominion, nobly brave:  
 For these, not she herself, shall feed the  
 grave.

"The spirit of the universe will leaven,  
 However slowly, our poor earth with heaven;  
 Only with ampler dawn of holy light  
 More sharply show the shadows of the night.  
 God's foes have grown more desperately bold,  
 Sore pressed, and driven to their last strong-  
 hold.

The bruising of the ground, the stern up-  
 heaval

Quickeneth germs of health, and feedeth evil.  
 Plant higher types, for these at length prevail,  
 Strong to extirpate lower growths of bale—  
 The Human deepens, widens evermore,  
 Till young Love reign from shining shore to  
 shore.

"The general Soul, with hidden help from  
 you,

Adapts fit frame for life-relation new,  
 Death's changed environment; Heaven will  
 endue

With novel organ for communion,  
 Congenial with powers ye put on  
 For ampler knowledge—whosoe'er indict  
 That mellow wisdom of the Stagyrte.

### CANTO IV. — HUMAN SERVICE — SONGS OF GOLDEN DEEDS

"Now will I show true nobles of our race;  
 Let them those libels on mankind efface!

#### CHARITY

"To dwell with evil loathed and drear,  
 High ladies leave their natal sphere,  
 To dwell where reeketh manifold offence  
 For delicate, well-nurtured sense,  
 Dividing holy heritage  
 Of inward treasure; there to wage  
 Deadly feud with the grim host  
 Of Satan, sharing all with lost

Wanderers in our wilderness,  
 Sallying to save and bless ;  
 Yea, very bread of their own mind and heart  
 They break, celestial manna to impart,  
 Not hoard for mere "salvation" ; gifts more  
 blest  
 Than gold ; faith, hope, and sympathy, with  
 rest,  
 Strength, courage, wisdom, righteousness,  
 and love ;  
 They bring to earth health, healing from  
 above.  
 We do not halve, we double what we share ;  
 It groweth more substantial, and more fair,  
 More ours, for being theirs (one family  
 We are of him who is afar, yet nigh) ;  
 Even as the widow's cruse of oil, or bread  
 Wherewith the famished multitude One fed.  
 Now rich and poor join hands ; the air is  
 still,  
 Saving for angels, singing "Peace, good  
 will !"  
 Yea, one may deem it even the happy morn  
 In Holy Land, when our dear Lord was born ;  
 And though the snow is on the ground,  
 Warm human hearts abound.  
 How dim soever, to be here is well,  
 Where these are making heaven out of hell :  
 Hark ! merry peals of many a Christmas bell !  
 Ding-dong-bell !  
 No more the evil ones low muttering talk,  
 For nigh the hallowed ground no fiend may  
 walk.

GORDON.

"Gordon, England's Red-cross Knight,  
 With many a dragon born to fight !  
 Great Gordon, waving a mere wand,  
 Rouses warriors who despond !<sup>1</sup>  
 With genial beam of his grey eye  
 Summons men to victory ;  
 Creates an army out of nought,  
 Unconquerables from hearts distraught :  
 His character, and equal laws  
 Enthrone secure the better cause.

<sup>1</sup> In China.

"And now alone o'er desert sands  
 He rides to Ethiopian lands,  
 Where his mere presence is a spell  
 For yon dark race that loves him well,  
 Where righteous, simple, true, and brave,  
 Long he toiled to free the slav  
 Tender as a woman, strong  
 As a man to punish wrong ;  
 Human lover, trampling self,  
 Scorning fame, and power, and pelf.

"Who, bursting on the boy of blood,<sup>1</sup>  
 Walled in with his man-murdering brood,  
 A dark armed threatening multitude,  
 Slight, travel-marred, almost alone,  
 But leaning on the mighty One,  
 Dominated the fell clan  
 With a power Promethean,  
 Power of greatest over least,  
 Of human tamer over beast.

"Arrived, he welds to one strong blade  
 Men disunited and dismayed ;  
 Burns the rods of tyranny,  
 Breaks fetters from captivity ;  
 At his well-loved name they gather,  
 Hail him Lord, and Saviour, Father,  
 Proclaiming equal law for all,  
 He bends to lift the weak who fall ;  
 That large heart holds the dark young slave,  
 And our white waifs beyond the wave,<sup>2</sup>  
 Whom he, delivering, with love  
 Follows whereso'er they rove.

"At sunrise how alert and eager,  
 Where the dusky swarms beleaguer,  
 Behold him from the palace roof—  
 Morn-flushed wave, and waste aloof—  
 Serene, yet anxious, watching Nile,  
 Where he winds for many a mile,  
 Surveying grim besieging host,  
 His rabble armed, and guarded post,  
 Waiting till the redecoats come,  
 To save his people in Khartoum !

<sup>1</sup> Suleiman, son of Zebehr. See Gordon's  
 "Journals" in the Soudan.

<sup>2</sup> His Greenwich boys.

Confronting cataracts, sands, rocks,  
 Thronged foes' indomitable shocks,  
 How they stem the adverse tide,  
 All British discipline, pluck, pride,  
 Panting to be at his side!  
 While England longs to rend the curtain,  
 That shrouds her hero's fate uncertain.  
 Too late! the man, deserted, fell,  
 Whom only treachery might quell!  
 Gordon, England's Red-cross Knight,  
 With many a dragon born to fight!

#### THE LIFEBOAT

"The manhood of your rugged coast,  
 Nelson's indomitable host,  
 Your manhood braves the raging seas,  
 Deaf to prayers of siren Ease,  
 Or warm Affection's humid eye,  
 To rescue shipwrecked souls who cry. . . .

"Hoar ocean's wrathful night-usurping  
 noise  
 Warns, like a dread god's doom-denouncing  
 voice ;

They lean athwart the solid wall of blast,  
 Blinded with flying froth from forth the vast,  
 That spits contumely from moving mountains  
 Of toppling water torn to foam-white fountains;  
 The maniac surge leaps furious while they  
 launch ;

Falls a dead-weight upon the bark so staunch ;  
 But may not shake the mighty hearts that use  
 All strength of stalwart limbs and iron thews  
 To strain their oars athwart the swirling brine :  
 Big-booted, and large-chested, they incline  
 Broad backs together ! grim face and set eyes  
 Of coxswain fail not, nor strong hand that plies  
 Swift function of the tiller : how they bound  
 Up, down, abysmal cliffs of night profound,  
 That flash fierce scorn of them, engulfed  
 beneath,

Hiss up to Heaven, and threaten with white  
 teeth !

Hark ! through the storm-embroilment a faint  
 sound

Of guns appealing ; piteous rend the sky  
 Red signals from the wreck's extremity !

" ' Their lifeboat battles with the wave ;  
 Grace Darling's countrymen will save,  
 Or perish ! . . . perish ! on the shore  
 They are thrown lifeless 'mid the roar !  
 Now mothers, wives, and children weep. . . .  
 All mothers, wives, and children weep :  
 All England bends above their solemn sleep :  
 Hear her intone their requiem full, and grand,  
 and deep !

#### SEA KINGS<sup>1</sup>

"Who are these three, that in a little boat  
 Have dared upon the Antarctic surge to float,  
 Journey from Durban round the Cape of  
 Storm,

Which hero hearts again to-day transform  
 Into a promontory of Good Hope,  
 As when grand Gama, and Diaz did grope  
 Their all unknown dim waterway of old ?  
 These Scandinavian mariners, more bold,  
 In a frail bark they hollowed far inshore,  
 Built from pitch-pine, and to the ocean  
 bore,

In a frail open bark ten months will beard  
 Atlantic dark and formidable, steered  
 By their own sea-gnarled hands with daunt-  
 less strength,

Till they attain to our green land at length.  
 From where grim bastioned Table Mountain  
 frowns,

And with the cloud his brooding forehead  
 crowns,

To the caged eagle-emperor's arid isle ;  
 By flowery Azores they rest awhile ;  
 By Mauros, Corobeda, tempest-driven,  
 They arrive in England's welcoming white  
 haven ;

The wonderful heroic voyage passed,  
 Through all vicissitudes come home at last.  
 Ah ! courage-consecrated little bark,  
 Men come to view thee, as wert thou sacred  
 ark,

Or very Argo of the Argonaut !  
 With tokens of Sea's rough embraces fraught,

<sup>1</sup> See log of the *Homeward Bound*, exhibited  
 at the Crystal Palace on her arrival.

Rent canvas, cordage, bruised wood, plainly  
tell  
Of rude storm-buffets; tangled weed, and  
shell  
On keel and plank now long contented dwell!  
By half-amused, half-indolent contempt,  
Or admiration for the bold attempt,  
Was Ocean held from drowning the three  
men?  
Rather the God they worshipped in his ken  
Kept, gave swift vision, accomplished craft,  
with power  
To stem, surmount, and baffle danger's hour.

“ ‘O'er beetling cliffs of water, lo! they  
bound;  
Engulphed now in a reeling chasm profound,  
Obscure, foamed, swirling; storm-breath on  
their side  
Lays them, and plays with them; and yet  
they ride,  
Storm-seasoned hearts of oak, on the wild tide!  
Endurance, vigilance, strength, iron nerve,  
Tense, ne'er relaxed, allowing none to swerve  
One hair's breadth from his function, even  
for stress  
Of wet, cold, hunger, thirst, or weariness,  
Strain unrelieved on every faculty!  
If caught off guard one moment, they shall  
die!

“ ‘In peril from the monsters of the deep,  
In peril from wild, ruptured surge's leap;  
Fierce blast drags down, ere they may reef  
the sail,  
Wave's weight half fills the hollow pine,  
bids bale  
For very life, yet never great hearts fail.

“ ‘It blew great guns; stars blinked, and  
were blown out,  
Or re-illumed; they saw the raging rout  
Of billow smoking skyward; squall-slung  
spray  
Smote, stung like hail; then louder than the  
roar  
Of breaker thundering on a rock-bound shore,  
A sound more terrible than aught before

Appalled their ear; some supernatural scream  
Advanced toward them through the drifting  
steam:  
And they beheld prodigious ocean herds,  
Whales spouting geysers, porpoise, dolphin,  
birds  
Rushing in headlong wild pursuit of shoals,  
Menacing wreck, so hurling to their goals!  
Buffeted bows “drove piles” in the hard sea;  
Storm, waving vast vans, howled tumultuously.

“ ‘Dies from the cloud-range conflagration  
red,  
And from long roller, taking hues of lead,  
Sombre, oil-lustrous, fading dun and dead.  
Cloud-mountains massed on pale horizons  
lower;  
Grim monsters follow, hungry to devour.  
One all unknown and horrible remains  
Beside them, while blood-chilling twilight  
waned,  
Huge, livid-backed, dim welters, and to mock  
Their own mast, two long spectral rods that  
rock  
Protrude in polished outgrowth from the  
spine:  
Sinister, *that* lurks near them on the brine!  
While on their masthead sits a weird wild  
glare,  
Like Death's pale lanthorn: ha! what doth  
it there?  
And what is that, which writhes upon the bare  
Pole, like what writhed upon the lance's head  
Of Dürer's knight, on his faint war-horse led  
Into the forest gloom by Hell and Death?  
What means the Portent? doth it breathe  
life's breath? . . .

“ ‘Immured in deep night the world seems  
to be,  
Save when flashed flame lets out the boiling  
sea. . . .

“ ‘But in long languor of clear ocean calm,  
When the loose tiller held in listless palm  
Made easeful noises with the lapping wave,  
Dear home-thought stole upon the heart so  
brave;

While loved familiar constellations rise,  
When they draw nearer native Northern  
skies ;

High planets hold communion with them,  
Pure worlds arising from heaved Ocean's  
rim ;

Luminous lives, how still and soft they move  
In the grey wave, akin to stars above !

While elfin phosphorescence from the prow  
Slopes in two murmuring widened folds  
below.

Or in blue day the momentary gem,  
Lovelier than a fairy diadem,  
Twinkles innumerable on the rolling  
Blue billow ; yellow birds for their consoling,  
Pale yellow, flying o'er the lispng foam,  
Alight upon the ocean-cradled boom ;  
The gentle giant Olsen fondly feeds ;  
Till they, relying on his kindly deeds,  
Perch on his shoulder, lilting blithe and gay,  
Who sorrows when he finds them flown away.

“ Often before a merry breeze they flew,  
A wake of simmering silver in the blue ;  
Many a nautilus with filmy sail,  
And fishes panoplied in rainbow mail,  
And flying fish with blithe young hearts they  
hail.

Or ample-pinioned, gleaming albatross,  
Swooping and circling, dipped in soft sea-  
moss,

Then sunward soared, on calm, unwearied  
wing,

With plaintive white mew, air-meandering.

“ Alone upon the inward-murmuring sea,  
Alone with God in the Immensity !  
With worship, pious, temperate men, they call  
Weekly together on the God of all.

“ Kingcraft, and overlordship of the seas  
From Olsen, Nilsen, Bernhard, such as these,  
And their Norse kindred, Nelson, Franklin,  
Drake,

For men of other blood 'tis hard to take.  
They prove the race of heroes not extinct,  
By whom our common-seeming years are  
linked

To those that loom more fair in the dim past  
When Gama loosed his canvas to the blast,  
And Raleigh in strange waters anchor cast.

“ Not ease, but hardship, suffering, priva-  
tion

Root, toughen, hearts of oak, and mould a  
nation.

Bear witness Holland, Athens, Albion !  
Columbia, Teuton, Italy, made one !  
By toil, and strife, and agony 'twas done.

#### THE ISLE OF LEPERS<sup>1</sup>

“ An isle of lepers ! perishing in pain,  
Exiled from happy hale men ; Health is fain  
To banish from her loathed Contamination.  
Yet a priest-hero of the gallant nation,  
France, saintly even as their priest of Ars,  
Or him who shineth, an immortal star  
In the grand page of Hugo, her grand bard,  
Named Myriel, shrinking nerve will disregard  
For love of God, and of our human kind.  
Deep pity made insensible and blind  
To natural aversion, mortal danger.  
Following One born in the lowly manger,  
He shuts himself from all he held most dear,  
A minister from dreadful year to year  
To men deserted, loathed, weighed down  
with grief ;

Abandoning all that he may bring relief.  
Unscathed himself for years, the foul disease  
Hath eye malign upon him, and will seize ;  
Hath claimed the high redeeming victim now,  
Through whom your poor world will more  
god-like grow !

#### “ WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD ”

“ A Christian convert, a boy-African,  
Knowing the bloody lord of his great clan  
Sought him to visit with a lingering death,  
Because he had embraced Christ, humbly  
saith

<sup>1</sup> An island in the Pacific. Father Damien  
is the priest's name.

To a revered white teacher, urging flight,  
He may not bend his soul to feel it right ;  
For since he hath been commissioned by the  
king

Ingathered tribute of the tribes to bring  
Home to the sovereign — coin of cowrie  
shells—

Whatever cruel personal peril dwells  
Among those evil courts, how dare he thrust  
From him the fatal honour of his trust ?  
And so he braves the tyrant ; ah ! young  
black,

Spurned as inferior, thou hast e'en put back  
Poor human nature on the pedestal,  
Whence pale dishonour dragged it to base  
fall !

The lowest, whom men trample like the clod,  
Is of the royal family of God.

The humblest woman sits enthroned above  
The wise and proud by dignity of love.

Who liveth well alone hath found the key  
To every dim mind-baffling mystery.<sup>1</sup>

#### WORLD-PROGRESS

“ ‘ Enwombed in your imperial race  
Fair organising virtue trace,  
To one great arbitrating nation  
Moulding you by federation  
Of kindred peoples for defence,  
And high world-vitalising influence ;  
While in the purple pomp of war  
Dawn lovely hues unknown before,  
Iris-hues of mercy mild,  
An arc o'er livid flashes wild,  
Born 'mid ashen mists that loom  
' Thwart thunder-mountains in the gloom.  
Patience, Fortitude, Compassion,  
Woven i' the awful storm of passion  
On wrath-rent cloud, are only born  
Of rays that marry rains forlorn  
Of Heaven, who weds the Earth you  
scorn.

Beyond high service war may render,  
Himself hath lineaments more tender,

Whose very terrors wear a smile,  
Now Mercy doth his frown from him  
beguile.

Sweet Sister in the hospital,  
Who vermeils with ethereal  
Hues the cloud of wound, or fever !  
Her angel ministration never  
Faiileth ; hurt weans of our city  
Lie patient in her gentle pity.  
Yea, Dora, Florence, all your sisterhood  
Render illustrious our flesh and blood ;  
Ye twain appear ensphered aloft, afar,  
In sorrow's Night, a luminous twin-star !  
Spring, summer, autumn, winter drear,  
Are needed to fulfil the year.

#### MOTHER'S LOVE

“ ‘ She had tended, done her best to cure  
him ; now  
The little child of white and anguished brow  
With her good-will is nursed in hospital.  
Clad in worn withered weeds, she brought  
her all,  
And left the cherished burden ; she will start  
Out of her brief and broken sleep ; her heart  
Still seems to hear him call to her, and moan ;  
She flies to help, forgetting he is gone.  
Now since herself no more may slave for him,  
Dull daylight, rainy, chilly evening dim,  
Behold her underneath the window near  
The little cot, where she hath left her dear.  
She stays there till the allotted day for friends  
Arrive, the hour that makes for all amends.  
Every misty morning sees her come  
From the mean alley, now no more a home.  
Nurse, looking often from the ward, descries  
The wraith-like face with upward-seeking  
eyes,  
Haunting the wall ; they wonder how he  
does,  
The ailing child ; but when at last she goes  
Within the ward at the permitted hour,  
She dare not ask for news about her flower,  
Before she reach him, lest the word be  
spoken,  
Which, falling on her heart, would leave it  
broken.

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Mr. Ashe, missionary to Uganda, related this to me.

“ ‘Love blooms more large in yonder world  
of bliss ;  
But Love was nourished on the tears of this.

#### JUBILEE, AND THE GOOD EMPEROR

“ ‘Behold an empress-queen, who nobly  
reigns,  
And an ideal womanhood sustains  
Upon a throne, who wisely rules by laws,  
From long deliberation, clause by clause,  
Grown fair, and growing, fed with patriot  
blood  
Of Tyndale, Hampden, Sidney, and the good  
Martyred, unnamed illustrious multitude.  
Her fifty years of dedicated toil  
To all self-pleasing tyrants are a foil,  
Who only nurse their poor prerogative,  
Whether the starving people die, or live.  
Her large, full heart goes forth to all that  
mourn,  
Itself, alas ! wrung, lacerate, and torn.  
Our monarch hath a grander coronet  
Than any mighty predecessor yet,  
With many a subject people’s jewel set.  
First, orient India, fount of morning’s beam,  
Realm of the Avatâr, and wondrous dream !  
Australia, young with earth’s glad primal  
power,  
Who weaves weird visions in her lonely  
bower,  
Arms for defence her well-knit, stalwart sons,  
And launches navies, iron-mouthed with  
guns,  
To assure the Mother-mistress of the seas  
Dominion more unchallenged over these !  
In you, blithe land of long lake, frost, and  
fur,  
Vast volumed waters of St. Lawrence pour  
Their foaming thunders with an ocean roar !  
All ye sent children armed for many a mile,  
To help us nobly by Egyptian Nile.  
Court gentle Peace ! and yet be well pre-  
pared !  
Without our England, ill the world had  
fared !  
Arm ships and soldiers ! ill may they be  
spared !

Distrust world-citizens, who fain would loose  
Thine argent armour, deemed of no more use !

“ ‘And thou, dark Afric’s tempest-beaten  
Cape,  
Around whom Gama dared his course to  
shape,  
Sublime sea-comrade of Columbus bold,  
By perilous water-ways unknown of old,  
Thou, in the crown a diamond-beaming star,  
Art sending sons to jubilee from far !

“ ‘The pageant of her triumph proudly  
shone  
With warriors, led erst by Wellington,  
And that Black-armoured Prince ; red, sable,  
grey ;  
Plumed horsemen, helmed, with steel and  
colour gay,  
Swart Indian, jewelled in dim gold array ;  
Elect Colonial, powerful of frame,  
With nation-founding faces, known to fame ;  
From every quarter of the world her guard !  
Whose people throng the chariot way ; they  
ward  
Her throne from danger ; love is great  
reward.  
Bending with royal grace and beaming eye,  
Moves the good Queen, whose name is  
Victory.  
The stately triumph of her glory moves  
With loud acclaim, upborne by all the loves  
Of all the people ; kings and princes ride,  
Her escort with no ill-beseeming pride ;  
Her chariot rolls, surrounded by her sons,  
Of whom the nobler, grander port he owns,  
Who wedded England’s daughter ; who will be  
Magnanimous Emperor in Germany ;  
He, though great empire his mild rule em-  
brace,  
Hath character more lofty than his place.

“ ‘Here towering with eagle-crested casque,  
Face, form, proclaim one born for his high  
task.  
He, a more gentle, just, God-fearing Saul,  
Hath waged grim conquering battle with the  
Gaul ;

Will wage a deadlier with the dire Disease  
 That lays him low; yet, scorning his own  
 ease,  
 Conquereth here too; patient, cheerful, brave,  
 While borne in strong midmanhood to the  
 grave,  
 Bends calm, composed eyes on the public  
 good,  
 Who in his long death helps the multitude,  
 Country, and well-beloved; who will not  
 swerve;  
 For if Death numbs the right hand, left will  
 serve;  
 But when one symptom "*apathy*" they named,  
 Then all divined that Death at length hath  
 claimed,  
 If to the lover his dear world grew dim!  
 A Light and Hope of Europe quenched in  
 him!  
 Alas! for her, to whom he gave white heather,  
 In Caledonia, in blue lover's weather!  
 He lies in state, he lies in his long rest;  
 And she hath laid the sere wreath on his  
 breast,  
 Laurel, wherewith she crowned her Paladin.  
 In war proved, as in peace, a king of men.

"Our queen moves royally to Westminster.  
 Fortune hath dealt in gracious mood with her,  
 Yet one irreparable bereavement laid  
 A scathing hand upon her heart! Snows  
 weighed

Heavily, fallen from care-laden years!  
 Changed, since that early hour of April tears,  
 When young-winged Morning in the minster  
 shone,  
 Illumed with Heaven, her, wearing earthly  
 crown;  
 Changed, since her marrying the wise prince  
 she lost,  
 Before chill autumn, and the winter frost! . . .

"But the broad highway laughs with  
 various hue,  
 That seems to pour from forth aerial blue:  
 Roof, balcony, door, window, all the street  
 Teem with a happy people, fain to greet  
 Her, whom the loyal, glad, tumultuous sound

Doth welcome, Love's loud answering re-  
 bound  
 From her Love-loyal reign, re-echoing  
 round! . . .  
 Yet if this monarch were not good and just,  
 To Heaven the pageantry were only dust.

## CANTO V.—WISDOM AND WORK

## DETERIORATION.—II

"Did the fiend overwhelm you with  
 deterioration?  
 Deterioration is a mystery;  
 Yet none descendeth below the appointed  
 deep.

Henceforward the way mounteth upward;  
 It is darkest ere the day dawn.  
 For none fadeth away into nonentity,  
 Nor doth any carcase fester, unmitigated  
 defilement.

The fiend ignored, having blinded himself, a  
 core of soundness in the prodigal.  
 He feigned that all was dead;  
 Being Death himself, he could feel no life  
 around him.

Yet cheerfulness and amiability were well;  
 good also were generosity and patience.  
 These qualities rejoiced the heart of his friends.  
 Now surroundings more favourable being  
 provided,

Where germs of excellence may awaken,  
 The passion-driven may possess himself at last.  
 Enthralled and goaded by the slaver,  
 Cramped and grovelling in low dungeons,  
 He never straightened himself to his full  
 height,

Nor looked around him to far horizons;  
 Hindered, attained not his full stature—  
 His were no opportunities for development;  
 Never for a moment was he a free man;  
 Free to realise individuality.

Be sure the Universe needed the dread ex-  
 perience;

He was a scapegoat for Humanity;  
 Moreover, he was endowed with genius;  
 And her royal gifts are gain—  
 However terrible the price paid;

Whatever roaring gulfs the diver sounded,  
He emergeth with a pearl of price ;  
And for that let us be thankful !  
Offerings laid at the world's feet, they are the  
world's ;

Yet returning into his bosom, they are his also,  
Yea ! his own for ever !

For he and the world are indeed one.  
The destructible shall be destroyed,  
Consumed with ineffable anguish,  
And the unessential die.

But Individuality transformed  
Will rise regenerate from the ashes,  
Ideally-moulded, fair.

Or when doth God cease to heed,  
To yearn for whom he foreknew ?  
Sending to earth a chosen messenger,  
Cease to yearn for His bosom-friend ?  
Nay, but all souls lie in His bosom ;  
Verily they are His children !  
What though the mortal loitered,  
Frail tongue faltered in delivery  
Of the message thereto entrusted,  
Will Love hate, therefore, and forget ?  
Omnipotence own to failure,  
Or impatient Justice break her tool,  
Fling aside what herself hath fashioned ?  
Will God change like men ?  
Fickle, irresolute as one of you ?  
Whom He loveth He loves for ever,  
And will heal the hurt of His lamb.

“ Did Satan tell you Nature made the  
man ?

Nay, rather, God in man hath fashioned her.  
To these, whom he averred that Nature slew,  
Or cruel men, but whom we say God called,  
Since they who die are only half in Him,  
And half without, Death turns one pale dread  
face,

Yet shows another mild and merciful ;  
For death is ever in the line of life.  
Anomalies pertain alone to sense ;  
Yea, even to fairies of the fur and feather  
Death is new birth to a life beyond,  
Subserveth life ; the spirit travelleth,  
Through lower lives, to manhood, and yet  
higher.

Were there no God, or were the God malign,  
Child-mirth and lark-song were impossible.

“ Hath not the World-Soul fallen from his  
height,

His height of native Virtue, fallen low,  
To sin and suffer, with the souls in him,  
Who are ourselves, and every animal,  
Divergent, battling, erst one harmony ?  
And they are elements within the Human,  
Dissonancy clashing in the man,  
Fallen, that all may rise to altitude,  
No otherwise attainable, I ween.  
Now every lower life may climb, through  
man,

To angel, dowered with experience,  
How else to be assimilated ? Wherefore,  
In you dim realms of feeling under us  
Confusion reigneth ; creatures are at war,  
A mutual prey ; disorder rules, and death ;  
The strong wrest breathing-place from feebler  
lives,—  
Till Boudh, with free will's high prerogative,  
Feeds the lean mother-tiger on his body,  
And, dying, brings the very Life to birth :  
Now Justice, Mercy, dawn in the wild waste.

“ All, sons of light, will form one Har-  
mony,

Mutually permeable, cells  
Functioned to serve with punctual, never-  
failing

Service the Body, never isolated,  
False selves, to alien injury ; one only  
Orbs to his own completeness in another.  
Then each will labour for the common weal,  
Aware the commonwealth hath nourished  
him,

Laid fair foundations for his energy,  
With free environment ; one breathes for all  
Inevitably ; now with glad intent.  
If each divined with kindly fellow-feeling  
Alien need, and thirsted to supply,  
Justice and Love would change your earth  
to Heaven,

And hallow poor relations of mankind ;  
All human impulses were innocent,  
And spontaneity benevolence.

"All, sons of light, will form one Harmony,  
 Obedient orblets in their natal Orb,  
 Every one mirror, minister to other,  
 Warbling melodious in fontal spheres ;  
 We in our Mother Earth, the while She sings  
 Herself, with sister worlds, around the Sun,  
 And He, in his own course, obeys Another :  
 Beyond all moons, and suns of sense abideth  
 One Lifegiver invisible : the lion  
 Will lie low with the lamb, sublimely calm,  
 His lightnings veiled, his thunder laid to rest,  
 Strength couchant, folding meek Humility ;  
 A little child, with tender eyes, will lead  
 Them both to Eden-lake at evening-time.

"Yours will be world-pervading faculty,  
 Known only now so far as fugitive  
 Aroma rising in the dewy dark  
 Of night may tell a tale of breathing flowers,  
 Who laugh illumed with morning, blithely fair,  
 Or as the drowsy bird who dreams and stirs,  
 And twitters in the woven nest ere dawn,  
 Foretells full choir, awake in the clear sun.  
 Earnests already of earth-emancipation,  
 Presaging a more ample life than yours,  
 Open around, with sheath-dividing gleam  
 Of diffident warm colour, vivid hues  
 Of slumbering summer ; so the chambered cave  
 Allures with twilit possibility.  
 Body and soul, evolving many folded,  
 As germen, embryo, shadow what will be,  
 In ever complicating miracle.  
 Doth Nature lure her children with vain vow,  
 Hope hollow, longing ne'er to be fulfilled ?  
 Only in seeming ; for her satisfaction  
 Is ever more than of immediate want ;  
 Only in seeming ; she withholds to grant ;  
 Her mandate is upon you ; build your nest  
 For mottled ovals yet unmoulded ; winnow  
 The air with wings for lovelier lands afar ;  
 Find other lands beyond the sundering sea !

"Earth, air, and water are alive with voices,  
 Though men are only aware of a poor few.  
 The many aisles of forest, rapt by day  
 To deep dread silence, roar like ocean loud  
 For other ears more sensitive to sound ;  
 Although no Storm descend in his hot wrath  
 To lay a violent hand upon their pride,  
 Nor, with the stress of his enormous weight,  
 Strong swoop of his immense and monstrous vans,  
 Swaying huge boughs to writhen agony,  
 Their foliage streaming as in a flooded torrent,  
 Hound on Confusion—all the leaves wild whirl,  
 Trees creak, scream, shattering, ancient  
 towers uprooted—  
 By night beasts battle, bellowing o'er crushed  
 prey !  
 But, even in the hush of sultry noon,  
 There is a Babel hum of population  
 From dense tribes of inhabitants that swarm  
 Through bark and leaf ; the velvet moth  
 that flits  
 By twilight sings like birds ; fine ears will  
 hear,  
 While vision banquets upon hues unnamed,  
 Marrying sights and sounds for a new world.

"Well-wedded worlds are mutually involved ;  
 But though the Centre radiate through all,  
 Yet are they mutually impervious  
 To any but a few inhabitants  
 Of either ; but in trance the soul may burn  
 From sphere to sphere, and find a home in  
 either ;  
 In trance profound the soul is free of many,  
 Remembereth what she lost from memory ;  
 Some long-secluded chamber of the Past,  
 Experience obliterate, remote,  
 Whose windows are unbarred again to light.  
 Light leaps to illuminate the annihilated,  
 Forgotten, dark ; for Spirit, after death,  
 From vantage-ground of her eternity  
 Proudly resumes her ante-natal sphere,  
 And blends with earth-life ; her young eagle  
 vision

Surveys the suite of halls palatial,  
 Once more reclaimed for knowledge, where  
     she swept,  
 Moved with her beautiful, imperial train  
 Of fair and noble faculties, from life  
 To life, a never-dying Queen divine,  
 High throned, in glory, above Space, and  
     Time.

“‘Ponder the holy hieroglyph of Pain,  
 That hideth a high meaning; Christ endured,  
 Hoping for joy of world-redemption, wrought  
 Through crucifixion; are not all the Christ?  
 Who wail, unknown their grand prerogative,  
 But, when they are crowned, feel leap in  
     them the virtue,

Conceived anon through mortal suffering,  
 Then they exult, oblivious of the woe;  
 Earth a dim moment in their never-ending,  
 Irradiate career from heaven to heaven.  
 Whose virtue (for the human race is one),  
 A virtue sinewed from the strife with evil,  
 In time will heal the human family,  
 Full orb the grand Atonement of the Lord.  
 He, with whom myriad years are as one day,  
 Beholds men through the well-beloved Son.  
 Pause; nor presume to wrench by violence  
 Flower from bud; await the month for  
     bloom.

“‘The Deep is only Wisdom dark from  
 depth:

We lose our lower lives indeed therein,  
 Only to find the higher lives we lost. . . .  
 How do I know? One gave to me the  
     vision!

Blest are the pure in heart, for they see  
     God;

Galahad saw Him, even Percivale.’ . . .

I felt the fiend gone from me; for the child  
 Rebuked him, like the lifting of the cross.

‘O not without the sorrow, and the sin,  
 May be our human pilgrimage? Ah! why?’  
 ‘And what if God Himself hath life by  
     these?’

He answered, with a shadow on his joy,  
 Musing as though bewildered; then re-  
     sumed—

“‘What is your Faith? a hand that feels  
     the Hand,

Which ever holds it; numb are all beside;  
 Yea, many of you are numb, and deaf, and  
     blind.

A woman loses children at one swoop!

(I find her in the hovel, in the palace;

I find her in the fanes of all the creeds,

Yea, drifted in the sands of ignorance)—

A woman loses children at one swoop;

The wave, engulfing all, rejects her only,

Flings her alone upon the unchilded shore;

The mother loved them more than all the  
     world,

More than her own self . . . doth she  
     smile? . . . she sees

With far-away, sunk, visionary eyes,

Or inner eyes, that lend rapt air to these,

Them all reposing on the heart of God,

Yonder, as here, and they are with her still,

Because herself repositeth with them there,

Upon that heart; then wherefore should she  
     weep?—

Her faith, the world-o’ercoming victory!

She is among the cloud of witnesses,

Who testify poor human weakness can

Smile in the face of dire Extremity,

Because she recogniseth her own Father,

However closely-veiled! our children trust

Our poor love, though, alas! we fail them oft,

Confounding ours with that great Love  
     behind. . . .

“‘Notes of a singer soaring into heaven!

They seem to mount on ample, unfolded  
     wings,

Like some white bird, who, joyful, breasts  
     the blue,

Or undulate, frail boat upon a billow;

They are rays of light, aslope on a mild  
     cloud,

Or doves, who pulsate, gleaming to and fro

About the carven cathedral front of Rheims,

Thwart silent, old-world, visionary glory

Of shrined saint aureoled, kings robed, and  
     weird forms.

Now we are ware of dawn among pure snows

Of mountain mystical; keen flame divides

Our downy vapours, and pervades their grey;  
An upward-mounting beam, that shines from  
earth,

Arriving at the very heart of God,  
Swiftly arrives to nestle there at home,  
Disclosing Him a moment with no veil  
To our dazed wonder! seraphim are flying,  
Expatiate in blue celestial air,  
Alight, wave wings from radiant promontory,  
Clash, mix, confound their raptures in mid-  
heaven!

And now a gentle languor fades the strain,  
Fallen gently, like a feather; but in yon  
flashed

Ecstasy did you not surprise your lost,  
Reposing happy in the fields of Heaven?  
And tell me! do you deem such sounds could  
soar,

And wake such dreaming, if one tortured  
child

Had but one life of want and anguish given,  
Then founded in the void? It could not be!  
Might such a strain indeed afford such vision,  
If God were not, or did desert one child?

If this were more than seeming, all would  
wither,

Core-eaten shows of the false world fall in!

#### CAGED LARK

“Hear the caged lark, athrob with the  
swift song,

Who floods our sense with notes, a hurrying  
throng!

In spirit, doth he bathe in the blue day,  
And soar away

Over the dewy woodland, and green field?

Or doth he fancy a sweet nest concealed  
In the warm turf, a downy mate and brood,  
While he finds food?

Blithe captive, seems your prison ample, fair,  
Free voyage in illumined realms of air,  
Buoyed on your own full tides of happiness?  
Dear bird, we bless

Your glad content! poor feet on a soiled sod  
May never rise; and yet *you* rise to God!

Ah! mortal men may feel, confined to earth,  
Faith's morning-mirth! . . .

“What work is thine? to mirror in thine  
art,

Though feebly, as One may the power impart,  
The human Quest, the Age's mind and heart:  
While Nature doth her lineaments uncover  
To you, who have been her lowly and fond  
lover.

Build humbly a high music from within  
With pain and pleasure, righteousness and  
sin,

That shall not prove a merely jingling rhyme  
To wheedle idle whimsies of the time,  
Nor blared applause of idle fool to win,  
Perishing with him; uttered when you burn,  
The world may welcome, or the world may  
spurn,

Uttered for love thereof, as in your prime,  
The message you are commissioned to deliver.  
If men will hear, well!—if not, to the Giver  
Who breathes it though you will the word  
return.

Dare not to claim for self the utterance;  
One, out of His perfection, will advance  
The same to stand His own ambassador,  
Yea, full accomplish what He sent it for.  
In other ways, moreover, look that thou  
Serve men—help whom or want or sorrow  
bow.’

“His clear young tones, mine antidote to  
bane,

Methought resumed: I heard them once again.

‘The God in us, with God who is in the world,  
Perchance electeth from eternity

Time-process, evil relative, for ends  
Of grander good, beyond us, absolute;

But here we falter,

Grope darkling, and surmise with bated  
breath:

Yet our deep Best will justify the Lord:

How strengthen thews of any champion

Save through the powerful antagonist?

Civilisations only fall to ruin,

That richer may be reared from their decay;  
From chaos ever nobler order grows.

Who repents  
Hath God behind him, and the World-Idea,  
To uplift him when he fails; a mother holds

Her child, who falling, learns at length to  
walk.

Even that awful Shade, that made for Death,  
Changing resolves itself to Life at length :  
Trust only in the sound, strong Heart of  
all !

Nor only Reason, Love belongs to God :  
Our Human sunders ; our Divine will blend.  
Evil and good are complemental ; more  
I know not ; but there is a Deep beyond,  
In the Abysmal Spirit. . . . Hide your  
eyes  
Before the mystery of mysteries !' . . .

He shading his, that sought the Infinite,  
I droop mine, blinded with the blaze of  
light :

Methought now all the innocent victim-blood  
Streamed with the Lord's upon the holy  
rood :

I saw, and worshipped ; I believed in God. . . .

"And then he vanished. I awoke ; but  
earth

Was lighter than before for his sweet birth :  
Winter without me, in my heart was spring,  
Where all the happy birds began to sing."

## TO MY MOTHER

I AM weeping, mother, in your empty chamber ;  
 Beyond the pane, a fair familiar scene ;<sup>1</sup>  
 As a far dream only may the man remember  
 All the mirth of childhood that hath been—  
 Hath been here about thy young joy, O my  
 mother,

All the mirth and laughter of a child !  
 Was it I, indeed, and not another,  
 Whom you folded in your dear arms undefiled ?  
 Our nursery with snowy-folded curtain !  
 Here you came to bless the dreaming boy ;  
 All is melted to a memory uncertain,  
 Evening prayer, the game, and many a toy.  
 Clad in tender vivid verdure, early summer  
 Kindles leaf and bloom about the land,  
 While the nightingale, our passionate early  
 comer,

Overflows in song for one at hand.  
 Winds the river in the valley by the meadow,  
 By the old grey bridge, anear the water-mill ;  
 Old elms are on the green lawn with their  
 shadow,

A bloom involves the orchard on the hill.  
 You were wont to give me orange-petal candied,  
 From the china bird, laid yonder near the  
 clock. . . .

Ah ! visionary seasons, are ye banded  
 To weave illusion round me and to mock ?  
 In the chestnut grove our nest, where in the  
 leaf-time

We children took our strawberries and tea,  
 Hath fallen ; dove, and cuckoo here renew  
 their brief time,

Pale primrose, and the windflower, wood-  
 anemone.

While I recall delightful days of childhood

<sup>1</sup> Barham Court, Kent.

In the home of our forefathers when, from  
 school

I came to wander with you in the wild wood.  
 And my happiness ran over, very full.

How I lingered on the hard road in the  
 damp night,

When you left me at my school, until aloof  
 I beheld no more your lessening line of lamp-  
 light,

Nor heard the minished trample of the hoof !  
 Among German forest-firs you tell the story,  
 As we go, her hand who died, and mine in  
 yours.

Ah ! the bonfire on the hillside, and the glory  
 Of our rural meal among the bilberry bowers !  
 Then a cottage o'er a torrent-haunted valley  
 In the summer-sounding vines was our abode,  
 Where Morn and Eve upon the mount  
 continually

Wrought a robe of glory, as for God.<sup>1</sup>

Yearly, later, on an evening of the winter  
 weather,

With our youngest born who died we came  
 to you :

On arrival, what a welcome, at the meal we  
 ate together,

You gave to weans, and wife, and me, so  
 tender and so true ! . . .

All our converse in my manhood ! by the  
 healthful ocean-margin,

Or where we loved to hail the holy morning-  
 glow,

Beyond blue water, on the mountain men  
 have named the Virgin,<sup>2</sup>

On the glory of her heavenward height of  
 pure and solemn snow.

<sup>1</sup> Above the Rhone Valley ; in sight of the  
 Dent du Midi.

<sup>2</sup> Beatenberg.

In the isle where cloudy, melancholy Blaaven,  
Of noble mould, empurpled, rules the heaving  
sea,

You, enfeebled, I supported from the haven,  
To where Coruisk glooms crag-immured in  
lone sublimity. . . .

And the churchyard lieth beautiful to-day,  
love,

As in yonder dearer, earlier time,  
When we wandered hand in hand with you  
in May, love,

We children, you in all your lovely prime !  
Every green grave is a garden gently tended,  
And birds sing in the orchard near the  
dead,

Meet repose for one whose day serenely ended,  
Very weary, when the saintly spirit fled !  
Joy was yours, and yet your life knew much  
of anguish,

Disenchantment, weariness, and pain ;  
In the later years of weakness, when I saw  
you languish,

I felt our aching void would be your gain.  
Love unfailing, kindly counsel, all the pleasure  
In your mere delightful presence, and your  
smile !

It is a loss that none may map or measure ;  
Life will feel it every weary mile !  
O you, who were so kind and so forgiving,  
If I grieved you, how my heavy heart hath  
bled !

Ah ! and though unloyal hours may wrong  
the living,

We never think unkindly of the dead !  
Friend in need, O consolation of the mourner,  
Faithful heart, who suffered unremoved !  
You leaned upon the Faithful, not a scorner ;  
You loved well ; yea, and you were well-  
beloved.

A little lamb is playing in the orchard,  
Faery gleams are fleeting on the hill ;  
There is a breath of lilac in the churchyard,  
And the dead are lying very still.  
All the vernal loveliness a shadow  
Of lovelier havens wherein you abide,  
Cooler woodland water, warmer meadow,  
In the love of Him, who healed you when  
you died !

Faded letters, and our pilgrimage in dreaming  
Raise the dead, more dear than living  
men,

For, however we believe it only seeming,  
Night brings them warm and real to our arms  
again !

It may be, mother mine, when you departed,  
White and silent, that you did not wholly go,  
Never left your children broken-hearted,  
Help them more, are nearer than they know.  
And your remembered tones are more than  
music,

More than day the memory of your smile ;  
Clear from all the cadences of sorrow,  
May I hear them, and behold them in a little  
while !

Our eldest, and our youngest, are they gone  
now ?

For a moment I may linger by the grave ;  
It may be that my day is nearly done now ;  
Lord, I would have them yonder ; heal, and  
save !

## FOWEY

WHERE the wooded hills enfold  
A gleam of river water,  
Luminous brown ripples hold  
Communion of laughter,  
Silent laughter with the trees,  
Water-woven cadences,  
Bole and foliage leaning over  
The innumerable water-lover.  
A weathered arch divinely hued,  
With drowsy waterlight imbued,—  
All the delicate semitones,  
Purple, lilac, greys, and browns,  
As tho' ineffable fine feeling  
Over it were silent stealing—  
Orbed to rondure in the stream ;  
Ah ! ruffle not the glassy gleam,  
Nor mar the fair unearthly dream ! . . .  
A rill babbles like a child  
In the ear of flowers wild,  
Who, nodding to the lucid lapse,  
Quiver when the silver taps ;

Here a wheel revolving spills  
 Urgent weight of flashing rills,  
 To soft white flour bruises yields  
 Of the mellow autumn fields.  
 But another resteth near  
 All idly ; this for many a year,  
 Urged by falling water's weight,  
 Toiled for human ends ; of late,  
 Roofed by woodland leaves from sun,  
 It resteth, the long labour done,  
 Silent ; little herbs and flowers  
 Have woven delicate green bowers  
 Over the well-travelled wheel,  
 Wont to grind our misty meal.  
 Blue germander, feathery grass,  
 Jewelled with a dewy glass,  
 Wild geranium, wood-sorrel,  
 Visited by moths like coral,  
 Azure butterflies, and bees,  
 Lush luxuriant herbs like these  
 The old water-wheel enwreath  
 With a kind of verdure-sheath :  
 Even as a chrysalis,  
 Lapped in silent silken bliss ;  
 To the toil-worn all may seem  
 Like a sweet long summer dream.  
 So a new-arrived saint,  
 World-weary, after the death-faint,  
 In the sleep wherewith Love bound her,  
 Finds a lovely dream around her,  
 A radiant vision of repose  
 Involves her when her eyelids close.

Here the folding hills abide  
 Wooded to the water edge ,  
 Many a leafy nook they hide,  
 Where, landing on a grassy ledge,  
 One may moor the boat and lie,  
 While leafy light and shadow play  
 With the rippling river nigh,  
 Where tall heron, of plumage grey,  
 Waits, or bluebird flasheth by ;  
 Ample, warm, luxuriant light  
 Bathes in trance of deep delight,  
 Till the joy resembles pain,  
 And full eyes begin to rain.  
 Fair Lerrin hamlet, Ethy quay,

Your memories are dear to me,  
 Your murmured tones soothe memory !  
 St. Winnow's hoary old church tower  
 Drowns in a leafy bower,  
 While the waters gently steal  
 From the groves of Lostwithiel.

Now, rower, grapple with the wave !  
 Flood no longer smooth and suave,  
 Brown-ridged with feud of wind and tide,  
 For great ocean far and wide  
 Invades the river ; swiftly glide,  
 Pass the orchard-nested village,  
 Fern, heath, pasture land, and tillage,  
 Pass the sounding woodland shore,  
 And vessel lading, till the oar  
 Be shipped in yonder ampler space  
 Near the battlements of Place.<sup>1</sup>  
 Whose the gleaming porphyry hall,  
 Near Fimbarus<sup>2</sup> fair and tall ;  
 There the lady of Treffry  
 Compelled besieging hosts to fly ;  
 There bold gallants of the past  
 Marshalled many a seasoned mast,  
 Loosed the harbour chain, and met  
 The warrior King Plantagenet,  
 For irresistible advance  
 Upon the hostile coast of France.<sup>3</sup>  
 A quaint old tottering house is here :  
 To the homely laddered pier  
 Fishers bring their haul to sell,  
 Opal-hued, green mackerel,  
 Dry their nets, and gossip glad,  
 Blue-girt, big-booted, man or lad.  
 How often our lithe oar-blades quiver  
 Upon the healthful tidal river !  
 How they round the guarding fort,  
 To find a well-beloved resort  
 On tawny sand along the coast,  
 Where huge rugged rocks are tost,  
 By caves, for some enrapturing bathe,  
 Where nought may interrupt or scathe ;

<sup>1</sup> The seat of the Treffry family.

<sup>2</sup> The Church of St. Fimbarus.

<sup>3</sup> Carew says that Fowey sent forty-seven sail to assist Edward III. in the siege of Calais.

Only green billows dance, and fly  
 White sea-mews with their dear wild cry.  
 O the tender-tinted lavers,  
 Where a dimpling water wavers,  
 Pink, purple, lilac ; turquoise gems  
 Illume imbathed amber stems.

Crimson weeds from ocean groves  
 Fleck the yellow floor of coves,  
 Diapered by gently-flowing  
 Ripple when no winds are blowing,  
 Memories of lace-like foam,  
 Where confused soft bubbles roam,  
 Launch forth a faery promontory,  
 Form momentary silver bays ;  
 And when they vanish, heavenly glory  
 All the shining shore inlays,  
 A mirrored pure cerulean hue,  
 Fine fleeces floating in the blue.  
 Or by moonlight, how we drove  
 Our keel into a yielding cove !  
 Pale foam whispering on the sand,  
 Eerie as a goblin land,  
 Shadowy arch, and cave, and stone,  
 One phantasmal semitone ;  
 Like visions wizard Wagner raises  
 With mystical enchanted phrases.

O'er the harbour's pale expanse,  
 Resembling a profound death-trance,  
 Under a cold misty moon,  
 Fragments of an alien tune,  
 While with bated breath we float,  
 Are wafted from the anchored boat—  
 Choral singing, flute, or lyre ;  
 The grey wave rolls a flickered fire  
 From her lit porthole ; shadowy  
 Ships with phantom sail go by.  
 Hark ! some rushing, throbbing sound  
 Of a steamer outward bound !  
 And baying of a far-off hound ! . . .

Beyond the harbour a dim-heaving sea  
 Breathes, awful with infinity ;  
 Recalls the vanity of man,  
 His idle noise, his feeble span :

We are all children of the mighty Main !  
 Why fear to rest upon the Mother Heart  
 again ?  
 Launch forth, and sleep  
 Upon the deep !

## THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

THE merry-go-round, the merry-go-round,  
 the merry-go-round at Fowey !<sup>1</sup>  
 They whirl around, they gallop around,  
 man, woman, and girl, and boy ;  
 They circle on wooden horses, white, black,  
 brown, and bay,  
 To a loud monotonous tune that hath a  
 trumpet bray.  
 All is dark where the circus stands on the  
 narrow quay,  
 Save for its own yellow lamps, that illumine  
 it brilliantly :  
 Painted purple and red, it pours a broad  
 strong glow  
 Over an old-world house, with a pillared  
 place below ;  
 For the floor of the building rests on bandy  
 columns small,  
 And the bulging pile may, tottering, sud-  
 denly bury all.  
 But there upon wooden benches, hunched in  
 the summer night,  
 Sit wrinkled sires of the village arow, whose  
 hair is white ;  
 They sit like the mummies of men, with a  
 glare upon them cast  
 From a rushing flame of the living, like  
 their own mad past.  
 They are watching the merry-make, and  
 their face is very grave ;  
 Over all are the silent stars ! beyond the  
 cold grey wave.  
 And while I gaze on the galloping horses  
 circling round,  
 The men caracoling up and down to a  
 weird, monotonous sound,

<sup>1</sup> Pronounce *Foy*.

I pass into a bewilderment, and marvel why  
they go;  
It seems the earth revolving, with our vain  
to and fro!  
For the young may be glad and eager, but  
some ride listlessly,  
And the old look on with a weary, dull, and  
lifeless eye;  
I know that in an hour the fair will all be gone;  
Stars shining over a dreary void, the Deep  
have sound alone.  
I gaze with orb suffused at human things  
that fly,  
And I am lost in the wonder of our dim  
destiny. . . .  
The merry-go-round, the merry-go-round,  
the merry-go-round at Fowey!  
They whirl around, they gallop around, man,  
woman, and girl, and boy.

“ AH ! LOVE YE ONE ANOTHER  
WELL ! ”

AH ! love ye one another well,  
For the hour will come  
When one of you is lying dumb ;  
Ye would give worlds then for a word,  
That never may be heard ;  
Ye would give worlds then for a glance,  
That may be yours by ne'er a chance ;  
Ah ! love ye one another well !

For if ye wrung a tear,  
Like molten iron it will sear ;  
The look that proved you were unkind  
With hot remorse will blind ;  
And though you pray to be forgiven,  
How will ye know that ye are shriven ?  
Ah ! love ye one another well !

“ LOST ANGEL ”

LOST angel of a holier youth,  
O maiden fair beyond compare !  
Young dream of joy, return for ruth,  
Dawn, breathe around a holier air !  
Evanished where ?

Dear naiad, in a shadowy grot,  
Fair nymph, who lave within the cave,  
I yearn for you, and find you not,  
O freshness of the early wave !  
The river rolleth broad and strong,  
Great vessels glide upon the tide,  
High storied tower and temple throng  
With human toil, and pain, and pride.  
But where the purple light of morn,  
And thou, fair queen of what hath been ?  
Ah ! holy land where Hope was born,  
Ah ! freshness of the early green !  
O shrined within the lucent air,  
Where Youth hath birth with morning mirth,  
Clear-welling crystal blithe and fair,  
Leaf-mirror from the loins of earth !  
But I am drifting far away,  
With many a stain, with many a pain,  
I near the shadowy death of day,  
And youth may never dawn again.  
O grand cathedral where you prayed,  
Divinely dight with jewelled light,  
Soft woodland water where we played,  
Low music in the summer night !  
Melodiously flowing river !  
Ah ! blithe sunshine upon the Rhine,  
We would have leaned, and looked for ever,  
Your eyes more luminous, lady mine !  
Dark as a russet forest pool,  
With many a dream within their gleam,  
Now glancing mirth, now veiled and full ;  
Were they, or did they only seem ? . . .  
There is no grove like yonder grove,  
No water clear as our mild mere,  
No dawn is like the dawn of love,  
Nor any later flower so dear  
As are the earliest of the year . . .  
Evanished where ? . . .  
Holds life, or death, immense and still,  
Thee darkly fair beyond compare ?  
May Love her silver orb fulfil  
Unhindered there,  
Where Honour may not fetter will,  
Nor Love Himself bid love despair ?  
And you were one long vernal kiss,  
Immingling glows of lovelit rose,  
Perfume, rare amber, ambergris,  
And all the fervid Orient knows !

Ah ! mellow-ripe-of-autumn hue,  
Young, willowy, warm, impassioned form,  
Tone gentler than the turtle-coo,  
Brown eyes that took the heart by storm,  
And lovelier inward grace that drew  
My soul with all-compelling charm !

### " I LOVE YOU, DEAR ! "

I LOVE you, dear, and we must part,  
Although your heart be on my heart !  
I love thee, though thou art not mine ;  
I love ; yet I may ne'er be thine !  
And will our passion ne'er be fed,  
But wait, and wither, and lie dead ?  
Alas ! it seems a world made ill,  
Where poor love may not find her fill !

### " HANDS THAT WANDER "

HANDS that wander o'er the keys,  
Lithe hands over ivory keys,  
I remember hands like these  
Flying over ivory keys  
In the far-away dim years,  
I remember them with tears ;  
They were wont to rest in mine  
In the early morning-shine,  
And I wonder where they are ;  
Very, very far !  
If I ever came too near,  
I have prayed, God save you, dear ;  
Heaven gave your griefs and blisses,  
Holds in whatsoe'er abysses.  
You, who were my dearest friend,  
I loved, I love you to the end !  
What have we to equal love  
Here in earth, or heaven above ?

Maiden of the clear brown eyes,  
Where no sin nor sorrow lies,  
I love thee for thy melodies,  
And for thine innocent deep eyes.  
In the far-away dim years,  
May they rarely cloud with tears !

True and clear as now they are  
Keep them, Heaven, when I am far !  
I shall never come too near,  
Only pray, God save thee, dear !  
Guide in all thy griefs and blisses,  
Hold thee in the deep abysses !  
Ye who claim the name of friend,  
Love one another to the end !  
Have we aught to equal Love,  
Or in earth, or heaven above ?

### THE LITTLE IMBECILE

A MAN slow climbed a wooded hill ;  
An idiot boy was mounting too,  
Before him ; near, and nearer still  
The elder gradually drew.  
The boy paused often looking back ;  
His knees were tremulous and bent ;  
With large vague eyes along the track,  
Upon a sound he seemed intent.  
He crooned out " Waggon " o'er and  
o'er,  
For he could hear one far below,  
Then turning mounted as before,  
His weary footsteps planting slow !  
The man appeared oppressed with care,  
Gloomy, sin-burdened, and distraught ;  
He mused, " The little pilgrim there  
Was born by accident, for nought !  
Yea, what avails the vacant life,  
A mere grim burden unto kin ?  
Yet he eludes the bitter strife,  
The wounded heart, the tyrant sin ! "  
And now that they are near abreast,  
The elder feels a sudden hand  
Laid holdly in his own to rest,  
A quiet, unashamed demand  
For kindly help ; the boy who tires  
Prefers unhesitating claim  
On whom unreasoned faith inspires  
To feel a friend, without the name.  
The man supports the smiling child  
With pleased amazement ; hear him cry—  
' Forgive me, dear, if I defiled  
Thine innocence with calumny !

Yet I for whom affection fails,  
 Who fail to others, wildered roam,  
 Am leaned on by the child who ails,  
 Who sees, confides, and feels at home.  
 I love thee for the confidence,  
 That lightens and sustains my heart ;  
 Through muffling mists, though ne'er so  
 dense,

God's glory gleameth, when they part !  
 White wings of Ruth embowered above,  
 Her breathing spheres thee like an air ;  
 Unfathomable maternal love  
 Rebukes the ravings of despair.  
 Thou quickenest dead hearts to bleed,  
 And poor grey listless lives to live ;  
 My blessing on the gentle need,  
 Unlocks the miser hand to give,  
 Compels the barren womb to breed,  
 Moves Heaven a damned soul to forgive !  
 No uses ! were it only this !  
 I see that all things have an end ;  
 The boy hath innocence and bliss,  
 Yea, higher help himself may lend,  
 Which will be known to him for his.  
 Remove thy shoes, adore, and bend ;  
 Around are holy mysteries !"

## ARISE !

A SONG OF LABOUR<sup>1</sup>

FROM the long sleep of centuries,  
 Rise, arise !  
 Ye will be men at last, not slaves,  
 From your cradles to your graves ;  
 Life is dawning in your eyes ;  
 Arise !

Weary children of the soil,  
 Who toil and toil !  
 Patient millions of night,  
 Turn worn faces to the light,  
 Piteous hunger in dim eyes,  
 Arise !

<sup>1</sup> Written on the formation of Unions for agricultural labourers.

Miserable, dumb, and blind,  
 Of humankind !  
 With divinest discontent  
 Stony souls at last are rent,  
 Human souls immersed and bowed  
 In the dark dull earth ye ploughed !  
 From brute suffering ye break ;  
 Awake !

Murmur men who rule you, scared :  
 "What ! ye dared,  
 Doltish bovine bondsmen, ye !  
 To claim, with accents of the free,  
 For yourselves, and babes, and wives,  
 Human lives !"

Mummied princeling of the past,  
 Ecclesiast,  
 Shopman, overshadowing shires,  
 Dining delegates, and squires,  
 A moneyed mob aghast and pale,  
 Rant and rail :

"Who *told* you, scum of all the earth !  
 And dashed our mirth ?  
 Who *told* you, rebels, that ye grovel  
 Hungry and cold in many a hovel,  
 Or that the famine of your wage  
 Tortures old age ?

"Who told you ? let him drown for this,  
 With our bliss !  
 We, though we leave you ignorant,  
 Lest ye behold a yawning want.  
 Doled you gracious doles, and gave  
 Ghostly cheer to keep you brave ;  
 Yea, paupers, and we dug your grave !  
 Ye rave !"

Stalwart, sturdy sons of toil,  
 Ne'er recoil !  
 Dare they threaten violence ?  
 Form your phalanx deep and dense !  
 What though tyrants always cry,  
 When God consumes their tyranny,  
 "Dare not rouse you from your swound ;  
 Heaven's order ye confound !"  
 Never fear ; be calm, be wise !  
 Holy fire inflame your eyes !  
 God shall smite your enemies :  
 Arise !

## A CASUAL SONG

SHE sang of lovers met to play  
 "Under the may bloom, under the may,"  
 But when I sought her face so fair,  
 I found the set face of Despair.

She sang of woodland leaves in spring,  
 And joy of young love dallying ;  
 But her young eyes were all one moan,  
 And Death weighed on her heart like stone.

I could not ask, I know not now,  
 The story of that mournful brow ;  
 It haunts me as it haunted then,  
 A flash from fire of hellbound men.

## THE CHILD'S JOURNEY

A LITTLE child at morning-tide  
 Was journeying by train ;  
 She saw the shining landscape glide  
 By the clear window-pane.

Tall trees, fair village, and green field,  
 Blithe boys with bat and ball,  
 Church spire and meadowed kine appealed  
 To eyes that answer all.

Blue-frocked, by her fond mother, she  
 Embraced a doll in red,  
 And when she dined, full tenderly  
 The faded doll she fed.

The trains flew by with fleecy steam  
 That melted in the blue ;  
 But when there sloped the westering beam,  
 Weary the maiden grew.

And when the mother fond compels  
 With wisdom more than hers,  
 The weary little heart rebels,  
 The childish anger stirs.

With feeble hand she strikes her mother,  
 Who gravely kind reproves ;  
 And now the child her grief would smother,  
 Upon the heart that loves.

The parent folds her little maid  
 More closely to her breast ;  
 Upon her own the child hath laid  
 Her doll, and sinks to rest.

I wonder if the Heart of all,  
 Whence our poor hearts arise,  
 Be more unpitying when we fall,  
 From being wholly wise ?

## THE TRUE KING

AZURE waters lapt in light,  
 To folds of gleaming, widening blue,  
 Parted by the prow's swift flight,  
 Soft simmered as we lightly flew ;  
 A mile-long lane of foam we left ;  
 White winging birds the clear air cleft.  
 A princely boy of Eastern blood,  
 Swathed all in silk-inwoven gold,  
 Of royal mien, with joy imbued,  
 A form of finely-chiselled mould,  
 Played upon the deck well-kept,  
 Watched the flying fish that leapt.  
 An English dame addressed the child,  
 "Shall I tell you of the Lord,  
 We English love ?" He sweetly smiled,  
 And blithely took from her the word  
 (From some white nurse he may have heard)  
 "I'll tell *you* ! He was gentle, mild ;  
 None see Him, though they try to find ;  
 Yet He is here ! but like the wind.  
 Though Jesus Christ a king was born,  
 Men put on him no real crown,  
 They made Him wear one all of thorn !  
 Nay, none more real e'er was known,  
 Than that by which His brows were torn."  
 She answered, "Your ancestral gem  
 Burns low beside that diadem !  
 The purple robe of Night He wears,  
 Starred over with the world's wild tears,

Was dyed in His own harmless blood,  
 Whose throne imperial was the rood.  
 No rival royalty Love fears ;  
 Who spends Himself for all is king ;  
 He hath you under His wide wing !”  
 The large eyes wonder, and grow grave  
 A moment ; then he runs to play,  
 To note the glancing of the wave,  
 Or the red pennon flicker gay.  
 But in far years, 'mid pomps so brave  
 Of yon resplendent Indian court,  
 And dangerous homage dark men brought,  
 A hallowing on his heart there lay  
 From that meek lesson which she taught.

### THE MONTH OF THE NIGHTINGALE

#### I

It was in the month of the nightingale,  
 I found my love !  
 Flowing with rivers of light in the vale,  
 Haunting a heart of moonlight pale,  
 The bird o'erflowed ;  
 Or in the dusk of his green abode  
 A cuckoo vied  
 With the lovesong tide,  
 And with a lark's divine delight  
 In a fountainous, azure-imbathed flight :  
 We lay and listened, I and my love,  
 We lay and listened in the grove ;  
 Butterflies blue  
 Merrily flew  
 Over wood-sorrel dewy wet ;  
 Mossed windflower and violet  
 Thrilled in the air, and our lips met :  
 From under a shade of sunny boughs  
 We saw the green blade sprout in the brown  
 Field fallows, and far haze of the town,  
 Cattle in misty water-meadow browse,  
 And young lambs play  
 In far fields of May.  
 All the young happiness of spring  
 Supremely flowered, burst forth, took wing,  
 In two young hearts to sing,  
 In two young lovers, in our own love,  
 Pure and happy as the saints above !

#### II

Now in the month of the nightingale  
 I have lost my love !  
 And I heed no more the tender tale,  
 But I hear the sorrow in a flute-like wail  
 Deliciously complain ;  
 No pain to him,  
 No sorrow to the bird in his covert dim ;  
 Only foreboding of a human pain,  
 Searing hearts to a barren plain,  
 When we find the love we deemed im-  
 mortal  
 Only death's flower-enwoven portal !  
 And we wander alone,  
 In a desolate land alone, alone,  
 Hearing a dove's low, soft love-moan,  
 Among primroses and young buds,  
 Where cresses waver in the clear spring floods.  
 I know not how Love faints away,  
 And with him all the bloom from day,  
 And with him all divine delight  
 From dull unconsecrated night ;  
 I know not how Love dies, nor how he is  
 born ;  
 I know my life is left forlorn.

### RETURNING THANKS

I THANK Thee, Lord, I may enjoy  
 Thy holy sacrament of Spring !  
 For dancing heart when leaflets toy,  
 Or when birds warble, and wave wing,  
 For tears, for April tears of joy !  
 The cuckoo thrills me as of yore,  
 The nightingale is more than wine ;  
 Bluebells in the wild woodland pour  
 Hues purpler, but not more Divine  
 Than blithe, fresh hues of Heaven on high ;  
 I thank thee, Lord, before I die !  
 Sidelong glance, brown rabbit furry,  
 Ere to foot-patted hole you hurry,  
 Under large leaf, rumped, shady,  
 By a folded lord or lady !  
 Anemone, and pale primrose  
 Already gone ! in place of those,

Blue speedwell, purple violet,  
 With the dews of morning wet.  
 These innocent pleasures never cloy ;  
 I thank Thee, Lord, I may enjoy !  
 Pure, fresh scents pervade the wood,  
 A dim, life-teeming solitude ;  
 Young juices mount, and gums exude !  
 Our children in dear days long fled  
 Pulled daisy, and sleek golden cup ;  
 One left us, and men deem him dead ;  
 And two have well fulfilled our hope ;  
 And all by Thee, my Lord, are led !  
 I lie upon the woodland green,  
 With sorrel, little strawberry flower ;  
 Through pink wild apple-bloom sun-sheen  
 Plays hide-and-seek, in the lush bower  
 Of murmurous leaves, and hour by hour  
 Makes shine and shade for the soft flower,  
 While birds unbosom love's young glee,  
 Dallying round the nested tree ;  
 For I, and all, are dear to Thee !  
 How long since I was a blithe boy !  
 Much went with youth's removing wing ;  
 But, Lord, I thank Thee I enjoy  
 As then, Thy sacrament of Spring !

## THE POLISH MOTHER

### A DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE<sup>1</sup>

SHE looked a matron from the ancient world  
 Of Roman grandeur, tall, pale, proud, black-  
 robed.

Strong passion chained, with poignant suf-  
 fering,  
 Held down by stern hand, crouched, yet  
 writhed alive

In her fine countenance ; whose graven lines,  
 White hair, death-pallor, and deep caverned  
 eyes,

That lustrous burned with fierce intensity,  
 All prophesied the death-doom imminent.  
 She was a Pole of ancient lineage,

Whose son, Count Român, made a prisoner  
 In those great hopeless battles, which the race  
 Fought, for the right to be, with the strong  
 Tzar,  
 Had been condemned to labour in the mines  
 Of far Siberia perpetually.

Now she conferred with one, whom suffo-  
 cation  
 Of all free thought and speech in Russia made  
 Wild to wrest freedom by main force, a lady,  
 Young, fair, fanatical ; to whom she told  
 The story of the wrongs, that wrung consent  
 from her  
 To violent counsels of conspiracy.

" I could not kneel ; my knees were turned  
 to marble ;  
 I could not save my son, my only child !  
 And yet you know well how I loved him ! how  
 I had waited for him, tended from the  
 birth,  
 Fed from my own life's fountain ; when he  
 ailed,  
 Bent over, watching wakeful by the bed,  
 Hearing him breathe, and soothed when he  
 awoke.

Myself I ministered to want and whim ;  
 My being hung on his ; my thoughts returned  
 Thither, however far afield they flew,  
 Hovered around him, birds about the nest.  
 Ah ! boy beloved, my heart's home was in  
 thee !

" Hours of our early love, the balmy moons  
 By drowsy, lipping seas in the warm south,  
 Were they more dear than later summer  
 evenings,  
 When, after favourite tale, accompanied  
 By rippling laughter from my baby boy,  
 Mother undressed him (nurse had holiday,  
 Sweet birds were warbling, the young rose  
 was blown) ?

We sang our simple songs, dear, you and I,  
 Until you only crooned them, half in dream,  
 Then softly glided into slumberland,  
 Away from mother ; but her heart still held  
 you !

<sup>1</sup> Founded on a real incident, mentioned by  
 Liszt in his " Life of Chopin."

"Where is he now? In some profounder sleep.

Where is he now? . . . they say I might have saved him.

I was too proud. My God! I might have knelt!

There was one moment only—I could not!

"My son, the count, fought like a patriot Pole

Against our old hereditary foe.

Made captive, Nicholas himself had added,

When signing the imperial decree

Of lifelong death in far Siberian mine,

Whence none emergeth more to social day,

'Thither shall he go manacled, on foot.'

Ha! do you know what that means? 'chained, on foot'?

It means to tramp long winter through to summer,

Athwart interminable steppes, and snow,

To that bleak outcast region beyond hope,

With one coarse convict yoked a bondfellow,

Defiled in body, and defiled in mind,

With him to tramp, to feed, to lie by night,

Subject to every brutal outrage from

Soldiers who love to wreak indignity

Upon one outlawed, of high grade, refined:

And if his strength (but he was weak, and ailing)

Sustained through that dread journey to the goal,

Live burial in the nether deeps of earth,

Toil so repulsive, so interminable,

That men have killed their guard, to win the grace

Of being knouted to a speedier death—

Or else malignant years, that beat men down,

Each with his own peculiar stroke, combine

Here their slow malice into one supreme

Assault, and turn the young man deaf, blind, grey,

Quench in a year the fading faculties,

Render imbecile ere the very end.

Or men escape in winter weather; then

They may lie down, and faint out in the snow. . . .

And this was he who lay upon my breast,

And drew warm life I stored up there for him—

For whom I would have parted with all mine. . . .

Why, then, did I not save him? why? God knows!

If God there be—but when the tyrant came,

An evil sneer upon his curving lips,

My knees were turned to stone; I could not move—

Kneel to the insolent murderer of my people,

Who now would torture my poor child, in wrath,

Because he paid his country what he owed her—

You know not the conditions the man made,

Indignities designed to break my pride—

To break the pride of Poland—of one born

Illustrious as any emperor.

On such conditions, if I craved for pardon,

(Pardon forsooth! and mercy! and from him!)

He would toss me the freedom of my child,

Contemptuously as you toss bone to dog—

Exemption from his own injustice, his

Inhuman sentence—nay, there is a God!

This man must needs be punished for his life!

These degradations I refused; for honour

Is more than life; more even than one's child.

At last, the Empress, pitying me, arranged

That I should ask an audience of her;

Then he the autocrat would cross the room,

And I upon my knees might crave for grace. . . .

He entered, while we talked; I never moved.

So she, supposing that I knew him not,

Rose, and I rose too; but he slowly passed,

Staring, incarnate Insult, in mine eyes,

The stare of arrogant autocracy,

With sneer that relished our humiliation.

He slowly passed, looked, lingered, and went out.

The Empress seized my two hands, and she cried:

'You have lost your only opportunity!'

"Face to face with the murderer of my  
 country,  
 I was the daughter of Poland, and no mother!  
 In that brief moment I beheld *my* Mother,  
 Poland, my Mother,  
 Dishonoured, and dismembered; felt them  
 part  
 Her frame, yet warm, assigned among three  
 tyrants. . . .  
 What did I see? I saw in vivid vision  
 Our green fields bloodied, corpses in the  
 woods  
 Of fair, brave brothers—felt them beaten to  
 death  
 By Tartar soldiers, maddening in dungeons  
 Deprived of day, dank, loathsome, for the  
 love  
 They bore our common Mother; saw corn,  
 food  
 Trampled by hooves barbarian, crushed down  
 Under the mangled bodies of her sons;  
 The flaming smoke rolled up from ruined  
 homes,  
 And women sobbing on the unroofed, wrecked  
 hearths—  
 And not one heart, but multitudes of hearts,  
 True hearts—lay broken in the mines of  
 hell! . . .  
 What did I hear? I heard the syllables  
 We loved to lisp in childhood on loved knees,  
 Silenced for ever among living men,  
 Forbidden to be spoken by the children. . . .  
 Ah! ah! the children! wailing they were  
 dragged,  
 Dragged from mad mothers' arms, and heaped  
 in waggons,

Jolted along the frozen snows, for nurse  
 The brutal Cossack, cursing when they cried,  
 Their mothers following the dwindling carts,  
 And floundering into snowdrifts; happy they,  
 If to remain there! while the children's cry  
 Dwindled to silence; all became so still! . . .  
 Supreme stroke this of cynic cruelty—  
 Infants torn from their native land, to learn  
 Upon an alien soil from mortal foe  
 Forgetfulness of our parental love,  
 Indifference to their people's agony,  
 That so young Polish hearts might ossify  
 To Russian! trained to arms for their  
 oppressor,  
 Young Poles made Russian soldiers, and  
 degraded,  
 Cajoled by demons to abjure themselves. . . .  
 Seeing and hearing which, how could I  
 kneel  
 To him, in whom our injury was summed,  
 And centred; radiated, from a deadly sun?  
 I could not kneel, not even to save my  
 child. . . .  
 But I am going to Român; all is well;  
 If not to meet him, then to rest in sleep.  
 He sleeps, he rests now. Very soon I with  
 him.  
 Ah! so is best! much better than if Time  
 Slackened the close clasp of Love's fingers,  
 ere,  
 Wearying of His mumbling fools, He broke  
 them. . . .  
 And vengeance only slumbers: work your  
 will  
 Upon the tyrant! I will help; take gold;  
 Earth will be cleaner for one stain wiped out."

POOR PEOPLE'S CHRISTMAS

1890



## POOR PEOPLE'S CHRISTMAS

HARK! the Christmas bells ring round!  
Many light hearts with joy abound!  
They come and go upon the wind,  
"Peace and goodwill to all mankind!"

Where bleared faces of mean houses  
Lean as if to touch each other,  
Where idle, ugly vice carouses,  
And the brown fogs choke and smother,  
In a room confined, dun, damp,  
Sits a woman scantily clad,  
Sewing by a feeble lamp  
Some lovely raiment deftly made,  
Rich apparel to be worn  
In splendid halls by laughing wealth,  
Whose pale sister here forlorn  
Leaves in it all her youth and health—  
Ah! I wonder, can it bless,  
Such living lining to a dress? . . .  
Take the lovely raiment off!  
Hell hath given it with a scoff!  
For she must toil ere daydawn dim,  
Long after winter suns have set,  
And even so, the Hunger grim  
Slow feeds on lives she fights for yet—  
Three tattered little ones who play  
Faint-hearted on the mouldy floor:  
She fought for other two; but they  
Have gone where want can hurt no more.

Vile fumes, with subtle poison-breath,  
That fouls the throat, killed one young child:  
Roofs bulge in this abode of death,  
Walls totter and tumble, damp-defiled;  
While on the too scant space intrude  
Rats, hustling the young human brood.  
A mean bed, table, broken chair,  
Furnish the degraded room;  
A print, some delf, one flower fair,  
Are fain to mitigate the gloom.

Bitter winter wind shrilled through  
Rotten door and window when it blew.

She, working early, working late,  
Breathes no impatient word nor wail:  
Her heavy task may ne'er abate,  
Though eyesight fade and strength may fail.

Her husband, long through accident  
Disabled, might no more endure  
To watch her, burden-bowed and bent,  
The wife, whom these dark dens immure,  
Whom no longing love may cure,  
Nor help, though she be bruised and rent.

Confused, heartbroken, he will hide  
His eyes for ever under tide  
Of deeply, darkly rolling Thames,  
That quenches hottest human flames.

Merry Christmas bells ring round!  
Many light hearts with joy abound;  
They come and go upon the wind,  
"Peace and goodwill to all mankind!"

Merry Christmas chimes rang round,  
When he sought the river's bank,  
Rang over him the while he drowned,  
And in the depths a third time sank,  
While laughing youth's swift-flying feet  
To music danced in yonder street,  
And in gay halls glad masquers meet.

Now the flickering lamplights float  
Idly over corpse and boat;  
From tower and temple London frowns  
On all this ruin of her sons;  
On her huge dome the cross of gold  
Gleams in winter starlight cold;

Nor storied old-world obelisk,  
 Nor the illumined horal disk  
 High orb'd on stately Westminster,  
 Where the Parliaments confer,  
 Take any heed of the black spot  
 That doth the silver moonlight blot,  
 A human shape unhearing hours,  
 Pealed now from modern, ancient towers,  
 That dark on turbid water ridges  
 Rocks in reflected flame from bridges  
 Where steam-lit trains, with living freight,  
 Going to glad homes elate,  
 Near ships laden with merchandise,  
 Spice, or silk of gorgeous dyes,  
 Where men from far realms of sunrise  
 Wait, forgetting care and sorrow,  
 In hope to greet dear friends to-morrow,  
 While their paddle-wheel foams over  
 The swaying corse, a senseless rover.

He turned from life, but left some words  
 Dyed in the anguish of his soul ;  
 Deep anguish the brief page records,  
 Before dull waters o'er him roll.

“ Upon the bed, or broken chair,  
 I sit and brood in my despair,—  
 Those Christmas bells ! it is two years  
 Since our sweet little boy went home ;  
 I see him now through blinding tears,  
 The snowflakes melting on him, come,  
 Delighted, babbling of the joys  
 Behind a lighted window-pane—  
 Firs taper-lit, festooned with toys,  
 Sweets, trinkets, woolly lamb, doll, train—  
 For he had peeped in from the flags,  
 Where the lustrous hall discloses  
 To the boy in faded rags  
 Happy children, pink like roses,  
 Playful, laughter-loving posies,  
 Clustered flowers with coloured dresses ;  
 One pretty girl had *such* long tresses !  
 And then, the feast in all its pride !  
 Our cold, wan child stood eager-eyed,  
 Until some menial waved aside—  
 Another little waif stood far :  
 On his thin face he wore a scar ;

Half naked ; matted ringlets curled ;  
 He had no friend in all the world.  
 He peers in where these wonders are ;  
 O'er him wavers the snowstar,  
 Ghostly in the yellow gleam  
 From the mansion's window-beam.  
 Willie took him by the hand :  
 ‘ Won't you with me nearer stand ? ’  
 He entered, shaking off the snow,  
 Shone for us, laughing, our sunshine,  
 Exhilarating hearts like wine ;  
 The dear glad face was all aglow,  
 Though mostly pale from want, like mine.  
 Then Mary took his jacket off.  
 Put the small torn boots to dry,  
 And we made little of the cough  
 That on our hearts weighed heavily.  
 A Christmas treat with cakes and tea  
 We gave our bairns ; the fare was rough ;  
 Yet this poor Yule-meal by the fire  
 We all enjoyed, a lordly feast !  
 She rested from long toils that tire,  
 And my small wage the store increased ;  
 I got a little bit of green  
 To try and brighten up the scene.  
 But now, skilled craftsman I, unused  
 To ruder labour, weights must lift,  
 That overstrain my strength abused ;  
 Famine else will give short shrift !  
 So to this impotence I drift !  
 At times my brain seems all confused—  
 To watch my Mary's failing eyes,  
 And youth consumed with too much toil,  
 While patient at her task she dies !  
 I, pinioned, helpless, may not foil  
 Slow deaths that round my dear ones  
 coil !  
 Over a new dress sits she bowed ?—  
 I thought it was her own white shroud ;—  
 Our wee Willie, like a weed,  
 Thrown into a nameless grave—  
 I am but one more mouth to feed !  
 They starve here, and I cannot save . . .  
 I am but one more mouth to feed ! . . .  
 We could not even put a stone,  
 To show where Willie lies alone !  
 When I left home, my love would write  
 That, ere our Willie went to bed,

He, wishing father a good-night,  
Kissed the written words, she said,  
Ere softly slept the curly head.  
Ah ! and now the boy is gone !—  
We could not even put a stone !

“ O Christmas bells, ye chime to jeer  
Poor folk shut in with mortal fear !  
' Peace and goodwill to all mankind !'  
—Save those whom want and rich men  
grind—

Art, Science, Banquet, Church, and Revel  
Westward feed sense, heart and mind ;  
Down East, the unshared rule of the devil !  
Long have I sought ; I cannot find  
God who delivers men from evil ! . . .

(*Bells peal.*) “ . . . Well loved those chimes  
In happier times. . . .

Once more we have our cheerful home,  
Around the window roses blow ;  
I see my Mary fair as foam,  
Blithely singing, come and go,  
While rosed with health the children roam. . .  
Now we are ground 'twixt two millstones—  
The man that wrings the murderous rent,  
Yet shelters not the naked bones  
Cooped in his plague-fraught tenement,—  
And vampires who suck sleek content  
From human anguish, tears, and groans,  
Clutch the fruit of our life's toil,  
And batten upon the unholy spoil,  
Throwing a wage-scrap back for fuel,  
Lest man-mills stop the labour cruel,  
And cease with Death unequal duel.  
Shall we, chained starvelings, go, buy law,  
To save us from the robber's claw ?  
Law is a cumbrous thing to move ;  
It will not come and help for love !  
Buy women to starve at ' market-price,'  
Gallio-Law, with looks of ice,  
Smiles placid ; poor man, steal a crust,  
To feed them, Jefferies, judge most just.  
Thee, wrath-red, into gyves will thrust.  
' Church and State will guard,' saith he,  
' The sacred rights of property !'  
England wrestles for the slave  
Enthralled beyond the alien wave ;

Why doth this mother of the free  
Let her strong sons with cruel glee  
Crush weak sisters at her knee ?  
Set thine own house in order—then  
Go and preach to evil men !  
In feudal dungeons underground  
They buried their live victims bound,  
And we in our vile vaults immure  
These whose crime is to be poor,  
Starve babes and women innocent,  
Tortured, in black prisons pent.  
Feudal lords would *feed* the slave ;  
But Capital from his despair  
Extorts more toil than flesh can bear,  
Keeps him half-living in his grave,  
That self may earn, and master have,  
Till kindlier Death arrive to save.

“ True men devise large schemes to heal  
This gangrene of the Commonweal,  
This prime injustice of the world,  
That drones, who waste the wealth, may  
steal

From makers, to the dunghill hurled. . . .  
. . . Ah, many hearts will founder and fail  
Before these noble aims prevail ! . . .  
(Not violence the cause will serve,  
For blood and iron breed their kin ;  
Yet the serried ranks ne'er swerve,  
Armed Force and Fraud, Law-masquing  
Sin ! . . .)

Ah ! Violence may be forgiven  
To men fate-harried, God-bereaven ;  
They tear their way forth to the end,  
Toward which by vital growth we tend ;  
Yea, war may plant good laws, free states ;  
One cuts the knot in desperate straits.—  
. . . My comrades yonder at the club  
Will make short work of these that rob,—  
While we prepare the general mind,  
Our best-beloved rot here and perish. . . .  
I'll watch no more these millstones grind  
The tender hearts and lives I cherish ! . . .  
That robber's rent was in arrear ;  
He came with flint-face, cane, black coat,  
Would fling us on the street ; yea, here,  
Shook my poor Mary, white with fear—  
No strength was mine to clutch his throat !

My dying wife must stitch at those ;  
*Rich* sick folk may lie abed,  
 Or fly from our black smoke and snows  
 To where blue air and ocean wed. . . .  
 Man's right ! we are powerless to assert it,  
 And man himself is God-deserted !  
 . . . What use to watch slow murder done  
 On wife, and babe, and little son—  
 When near me glides Oblivion ? ”

So, while the indifferent body rolls,  
 With other things that have no souls,  
 On the blind tide to random goals,  
 In lusted lordly palace hall  
 Radiant boys and maidens play ;  
 On whose cold doorstep women fall  
 Starved, numbed, and naked, life gone grey ;  
 Within, youth's agile feet to sound  
 Of music flying, bells ring round,  
 Come and go upon the wind,  
 “ Peace and goodwill to all mankind ! ”

On massy bridge, on broadbuilt quay,  
 Tumultuous tides of hurrying wealth  
 Sweep the marred sons of misery  
 (Who thriv by sufferance, by stealth,  
 Their faint way ; near the parapet  
 Cower, dull aware of fume and fret),  
 Sweep them to where they may forget !  
 For riverward wan eyes are bowed ;  
 Beside whom roars the traffic loud,  
 And the many-nationed crowd.  
 See grimed and haggard him or her,  
 Amid the animated stir  
 Of throngs that leave a theatre ;  
 Well-dressed men cab and carriage call,  
 Round white shoulders fold the shawl,  
 Praise or blame what box or stall  
 Observed of acted joy or grief,  
 Carelessly, with comment brief—  
 Civic, or military pomp,  
 Massed colour, banner, drum and trump,  
 Court dames in well-appointed carriages,  
 Fair-favoured, fashionable marriages  
 Wolf-lean Hunger's eye disparages !  
 Wherein, as in some magic glass,  
 Ye may foresee your triumph pass,  
 Learning's vaunted vast appliances  
 Shattered in terrible defiance,

Flinging to the wild winds all affiances !  
 Do ye not hear low thunders rumble,  
 Ere, lightning-struck, the fabric crumble ?  
 Your marts are thronged, luxurious, bright,  
 Your magic moons confound the night,  
 Yet marbled warehouse, palace height,  
 Grey minster that hath borne the brunt  
 Of Time's long battle, all confront  
 Shame, grim Nakedness, and Want !  
 While close-shut doors of secret sin  
 Open upon hell-flames within !

Hearken ! how grand organ strains  
 Shake the emblazoned window-panes,  
 Where priest and gorgeous ritual blesseth  
 Whoso prayeth, or confesseth,  
 In holy twilight of hushed fanes !  
 Yet Christmas carols from the church  
 Mock those dim figures by the porch,  
 Huddled, famished in their rags :  
 Drink-sodden these from alehouse lurch,  
 And those lie numbed upon the flags,  
 Till, passing, a policeman drags  
 To ward or workhouse, “ moves them on ”  
 Somewhere, while they make low moan,  
 Pale spectres of dread Babylon !  
 But the flaunting harlot's ditty  
 Striketh even a deeper pity,  
 Cruel Want's degraded daughter,  
 On her way to the dark water,  
 Where horror-breathing, dense brown air  
 Grimly shrouds a dumb despair. . . .  
 . . . Is their a worse hell over there ?

The holly and the mistletoe  
 Cheer our banquet, wine-cups flow,  
 Light laughter bubbles o'er the bowl,  
 And we forget no Christmas dole ;  
 Yet our grief-burdened sisters die  
 Around us in slow agony,  
 While we are ringing in the morn  
 When man's Deliverer was born ; . . .  
 . . . Ah ! but our Brother too wore thorn !

Pale Mary toils ; her hollow eyes  
 Are patient, mild, of heavenly blue ;  
 Hourly repeats the sacrifice  
 That all the world to Calvary drew ;

“Father, forgive their cruelties ;  
 For they know not what they do.” . . .  
 . . . She murmurs, “Now I feel Thee near !  
 My little ones I leave to Thee :  
 Do what Thou wilt,—I trust, not fear. . . .  
 Thy Birthday bells ring merrily !  
 I am weary, and would rest,  
 Gentle Jesus, on Thy breast !  
 I shall see Willie,—yes, and Jim,  
 My heart’s own husband ; turbid, dim,  
 His mind was from our suffering so ;  
 Therefore the Lord forgave, I know,  
 The unbelief that conquered him.  
 Ah ! but I wonder much how long  
 He will endure their cruel wrong !”

A high-born sister who had left  
 Her vantage-ground to help the weak,  
 Supplying unto these bereft  
 From her full store whate’er they seek,  
 Came that night, a nurse, to tend  
 The dying woman ; and she heard  
 Near the poor pallet, ere the end,  
 Low song as from some heavenly bird,  
 Although no human lips were stirred !  
 Christ came, in vision, to the dying,  
 Led by the hand their own lost child ;  
 He saith : “Love justifies relying  
 On him, daughter !” and she smiled !  
 Near the boy a Christmas tree  
 Laughed with lights full merrily !  
 And the little waif was there,  
 Rosy, with a joyful air,  
 Recovered from his life-despair.  
 Near Willie the boy kept his place,  
 But fearless looked into the Face  
 That seemed to him one pure embrace.  
 “Love justifieth your relying,  
 And heareth ever bitter crying  
 Of those whom the hard world hath spurned ;  
 My martyrs high estate have earned.”  
 A common workman seemed the Lord,  
 Standing by the poor bedside ;  
 Yet she knew He was the Word,  
 That Jesus who was crucified,  
 And poured contempt on human pride.  
 Pale and suffering His air,  
 From sympathy with our despair ;

Around His heart like snakes lie curled  
 The sins and sorrows of the world :  
 But the full orb of light behind,  
 Unmuffled, would strike mortals blind ;  
 Bad men slunk dwindled and abashed  
 When from His eyes the sunbeam flashed.

“My servants fashion even now  
 Justice for the commonweal ;  
 From toilers with the hand, the brow,  
 Idle men no more may steal ;  
 My servants seek ; I whisper how  
 They may find the remedy,  
 Save My little ones who cry :  
 For I am poor Myself, you know ;  
 The poor are Mine, and I will heal !—  
 Already dawns millennium ;  
 Soon My holy reign will come.  
 The man who loved you, whom you love,  
 Was of the faithful band I move.  
 Awhile I hid my face from him,  
 For awhile his ways were dim ;  
 Baser, earthlier passion jars  
 With spherul music of the stars ;  
 Yet in the end all makes, not mars !  
 I vindicate his human place  
 For every member of My race ;  
 Let every manhood find free scope !  
 Now, beasts of burden, with no hope,  
 Men ripen not peculiar grain,  
 Given to each for general gain,  
 The social body to sustain.  
 Your Churches rarely worship Me,  
 Who am the incarnate Charity :  
 They call indeed upon My name ;  
 But their proud Christ with crown and flame  
 Is another, not the same.  
 I made known a suffering God ;  
 I consecrated Pain’s abode.  
 Yet are they refuges for faith,  
 Though she be faded to a wraith,  
 Though driven from the altar, she  
 Oft in the world find sanctuary.  
 Strong men, refrain from legal greed !  
 Hear the fate-smitten when they plead !—  
 Justice, not almsgiving, they need.  
 God with conscience dowered you,  
 With more than in mere Nature grew ;

All are brethren, all are one ;  
Wound other hearts, ye wound your own !  
Strong men ! poor weak worms ! when ye  
    fall,  
On whom, in trouble, will ye call ?  
When God hath changed your counte-  
    nance,  
And sends you feeble, fainting, hence ?”

Then that gentle Face grew stern ;  
Sun-blazing eyes confront and burn  
All the Temple-shadowed lies,  
The marble-tomb proprieties  
Of our later Pharisees,  
Pious, proud, decórous, hard ;  
He blasted base content, and marred.  
They shrinking wither up, nor linger—  
Even as when, writing with His finger,

In the old Syrian garden, He  
Shamed with a God-word quietly  
Phylacteried fathers of the men,  
Whose race hath the hard heart, as then.  
“ My birthday bells chime merrily !  
Come, dear child, more close to me !  
My best is evermore the prize  
Of souls who nobly agonise !”

No feeble glimmer in the room,  
Heaven's own effulgence doth illume  
Her spirit ; the poor sempstress died,  
And Love immortal claimed a bride.

Hark ! the Christmas bells ring round !  
Many light hearts with joy abound ;  
They come and go upon the wind :  
“ Peace and goodwill to all mankind !”

P O E M S

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TO A CHILD, WHO ASKED ME  
FOR A POEM

You ask me for a poem, dear,  
You want from me a lay,  
Who are a music blithe and clear  
Sung sweetly day by day!  
You, child, have songs within your heart,  
More pure than aught of mine;  
For Life, my dear, is more than Art,  
Who sings you is Divine.

EARLY APRIL

Is it sweet to look into one another's faces  
Over where the clear laughing water races,  
Where the herbs are all like delicate laces?  
Are ye in love with one another's faces?  
Flowers of the wildwood, tell me!

Virginal purity of pale primroses!  
Petal on petal of a sister reposes,  
And the shadow of either on either dozes;  
Wildwood flowers, we hail you!

Many daintily-formed green leaves have  
met,  
Strawberry leaf and violet,  
'Tis a little too cold for the nightingale  
yet;  
Philomel, he'll not fail you!

Fairy windflower, wood anemones,  
Delicate company under the trees,  
Snowflake ruffled by a merryfoot breeze,  
Frolicsome singing aerial glees,  
Frail white stars of the wildwood!

Every frail face looking a different way,  
O'er you arriveth a silver ray;  
Bronze boughs embroider a pearly grey,  
Luminous air in the wildwood.

O white windflower with the purple dyes,  
Your candour of innocence meets mine eyes,  
And bids the bowed heart in me arise:  
You are kin to the little ones, humble and  
wise,  
Young, newly-born in the wildwood.

The joy of our Earth-mother thrills through  
the groves;  
A long cooing sound of woodland doves!  
Feathered folk serenade the fair nest-lying  
loves,  
Call young flowers in the wildwood.

We are glad you are here again lovely and gay,  
Dull was the winter when you were away:  
We never have had any heart to play,  
While you were afar from the wildwood,  
And now we are off to the woodland!

Come along, little children! blithe birds are  
singing,  
Budding leaves with a magical melody ringing,  
Flowers faint censers of odour swinging;  
Come along, little loves, to the wildwood!  
We may find fairy forms in the woodland!

All the boughs are alive with a luminous  
green,  
Leaflets uncurl fairy frills to the sheen,  
Wings dip and dart o'er the woodland scene;  
We listen and lighten, we know what they  
mean,  
Spring has arrived in the wildwood!  
Sing heigh! sing ho! for the woodland!

## THE SECRET OF THE NIGHTINGALE

THE ground I walked on felt like air,  
Airs buoyant with the year's young mirth ;  
Far, filmy, undulating fair,  
The down lay, a long wave of earth ;  
And a still green foam of woods rose high  
Over the hill-line into the sky.

In meadowy pasture browse the kine,  
Thin wheat-blades colour a brown plough-  
line ;

Fresh rapture of the year's young joy  
Was in the unfolded luminous leaf,  
And birds that shower as they toy  
Melodious rain that knows not grief,  
A song-maze where my heart in bliss  
Lay folded, like a chrysalis.

They allured my feet far into the wood,  
Down a winding glade with leaflets walled,  
With an odorously dewy dark imbued ;  
Rose, and maple, and hazel called  
Me into the shadowy solitude ;  
Wild blue germander eyes enthralled,  
Made me free of the balmy bowers,  
Where a wonderful garden-party of flowers,  
Laughing sisterhood under the trees,  
Dancing merrily, played with the bees ;  
Anemone, starwort, bands in white,  
Like girls for a first communion dight,  
And pale yellow primrose ere her flight,  
Ushered me onward wondering  
To a scene more fair than the court of a  
king.

Ah ! they were very fair themselves,  
Sweet maids of honour, woodland elves !  
Frail flowers that arrive with the cuckoo,  
Pale lilac, hyacinth purple of hue,  
And the little pink geranium,  
All smiled and nodded to see me come ;  
All gave me welcome ; " No noise," they  
said,

" For we will show you the bridal bed,  
Where Philomel, our queen, was wed ;  
Hush ! move with a tender, reverent foot,  
Like a shy light over the bole and root ;"  
And they blew in the delicate air for flute.

Into the heart of the verdure stole  
My feet, and a music enwound my soul ;  
Zephyr flew over a cool bare brow—  
I am near, very near to the secret now !  
For the rose-covers, all alive with song,  
Flash with it, plain now low and long ;  
Sprinkle a holy water of notes ;  
On clear air melody leans and floats ;  
The blithe-winged minstrel merrily moves,  
Dim bushes burn with mystical loves !

Lo ! I arrive ! immersed in green,  
Where the wood divides, though barely  
seen,

A nest in one of the blue leaf-rifts !  
There over the border a bird uplifts  
Her downy head, billed, luminous-eyed ;  
Behold the chosen one, the bride !  
And the singer, he singeth by her side.  
Leap, heart ! be aflame with them ! loud, not  
dumb,

Give a voice to their epithalamium !  
Whose raptures wax not pale nor dim  
Beside the fires of seraphim.  
These are glorious, glowing stairs,  
In gradual ascent to theirs ;  
With human loves acclaim and hail  
The holy lore of the nightingale !

## A SONG OF NEREIDS

DING, dong, bell !  
We breathe you a sea-spell !  
While we leap into the blue,  
Link hands with ours, dear mortal, do.

Away ! away ! away !  
Our clear green waters are at play  
With a wave-bewildered ray,  
Where the billow-bathed shell-floor  
Looks a fantasy unsure  
Through the fluctuating billow,  
Where will be your pillow !  
Fish float there in open mail ;  
Ere your senses wholly fail,  
We will tell you a wondrous tale,

We alone may truly tell  
 Of what befell  
 Before the mournful years began  
 For mind-beclouded, wildered man ;  
 With our rhythmic rise and fall  
 We will ring your funeral !  
 Cease the civil war of life ;  
 For the turmoil and the strife  
 Of a human heart and mind  
 Are more than toil of wave or wind !  
 You who lay in Love's white bosom  
 Shall find more fair our cool sea-blossom ;  
 Leander homing to his love,  
 And liping the fond seas he clove,  
 We lured to our still coral grove,  
 Where years might ne'er deflower his youth,  
 Nor wither slowly with no ruth ;  
 While our kind fair Hylas took  
 From his lover's longing look.

You who late could climb the rocks,  
 Where the tidal water shocks,  
 You who dared to breast the wave  
 That yields wild rapture to the brave,  
 Life at full, or glassy grave,  
 Come and sleep, and be at rest ;  
 We will lull you on our breast ;  
 Never weep, nor strive, nor cry,  
 Nor wait till age shall strand you high  
 Afar from our sweet revelry,  
 And our wild, aerial glee !  
 But plunge into our gulfs, and cease,  
 Finding there a sweet release !

Foam, like lace illumined, smiles  
 Round the feet of granite piles ;  
 O'er sunny sands for miles and miles,  
 Along the breezy briny bay,  
 Melodiously we plash and play ;  
 Our wild joy's tumultuous sound  
 Fills the air and all around ;  
 You are young, and you are old,  
 You are warm, and you are cold,  
 Never wearying we sing,  
 All our foamy bells we ring ;

Away ! away ! away !  
 Link hands with ours in play,

While we leap into the blue,  
 Link hands with ours, dear mortal, do !  
 We are breathing a sea-spell ;  
 Ding, dong, bell !

PORHURNO.

### SEA SLUMBER-SONG

SEA-BIRDS are asleep,  
 The world forgets to weep,  
 Sea murmurs her soft slumber-song  
 On the shadowy sand  
 Of this elfin land ;  
 " I, the Mother mild,  
 Hush thee, O my child.  
 Forget the voices wild !  
 Isles in elfin light  
 Dream, the rocks and caves,  
 Lulled by whispering waves,  
 Veil their marbles bright,  
 Foam glimmers faintly white  
 Upon the shelly sand  
 Of this elfin land ;  
 Sea-sound, like violins,  
 To slumber woos and wins,  
 I murmur my soft slumber-song,  
 Leave woes, and wails, and sins,  
 Ocean's shadowy might  
 Breathes good-night,  
 Good-night ! "

KYNANCE COVE.

### O YEARS !

O YEARS, years, years !  
 Would ye were rolled away,  
 And I, 'mid April smiles and tears,  
 With my true love at play.  
 O years, years, years,  
 Who were all one May !  
 Ah ! the fragrant pine,  
 The fountain's pure, low bubble ;  
 Flowers fondle her feet and mine ;  
 Air-and-bird-wings trouble

Lightly light young leaves  
Of our enchanted wood,  
While the season weaves  
Around our vernal mood  
A beautiful silk sheath  
Of sight and scent and sound,  
Where we lie warm and breathe,  
Softly folded round,  
And our young pulses bound.

O years, years, years !  
That have nor warmth nor sun,  
And little else that cheers,  
We are drifting on  
With other things that were  
Rose-red once and fair.  
O years, years, years !  
Drooping bowed to earth  
With sorrows, wrongs, and fears,  
Radiant your birth,  
All one morning-mirth !  
Now feeble, faint, in tears,  
Wings low trailed in dust,  
On your mail the rust,  
Years, years, years !

## DYING

THEY are waiting on the shore  
For the bark to take them home ;  
They will toil and grieve no more ;  
The hour for release hath come.

All their long life lies behind,  
Like a dimly blending dream ;  
There is nothing left to bind  
To the realms that only seem.

They are waiting for the boat,  
There is nothing left to do ;  
What was near them grows remote,  
Happy silence falls like dew ;  
Now the shadowy bark is come,  
And the weary may go home.

By still water they would rest,  
In the shadow of the tree ;  
After battle sleep is best,  
After noise tranquillity.

## LOVE : TO A—

As of old the wildered dove,  
Wandering over waters dark,  
Finding neither fount nor grove,  
Sought shelter in her home, the ark,

So my little one, my love,  
Turns my restless heart to thee,  
Weary, wheresoe'er she rove  
O'er the inhospitable sea.

Time hath linked us heart to heart  
With links of mutual memory,  
Of gentle power if aught would part  
To bind us close until we die.

If the world arise to sever,  
Steals a tiny spirit-hand,  
Glides to reunite us ever,  
From the holy silent land.

Find the birthplace of sweet Love ;  
All our fairest gifts may go,  
Yet will He immortal prove,  
Fairest of all gods we know !

Find his nest within the grove  
Of mystic manifold delight,  
Though all the summer leaves remove,  
He will abide through winter's night ;  
Unsearchable the ways of Love !  
Though all the singing choirs be gone,  
Love himself will linger on.

Discover hidden paths of love,  
Explain the common miracle,  
Dear abundant treasure-trove,  
Celestial springs in earthly well,  
In human vase Heaven's ænomet !

## PASSION

O PALE my lady, where shall we ride?  
 Into the forest dark and wide,  
 Into the roaring deep sea-tide,  
 You and I only, side by side?

Your eyes, like stars in a well's clear gloom,  
 May be sinister orbs imposing doom,  
 Gates of life, or doors of the tomb,  
 Yet mellowed than moonlit foam  
 Your burning beauty warms the room.

Cling to me, cling to me, lady mine,  
 Your lips are more than the red red wine,  
 Your flower white glows in the rosy shine,  
 We quaff to-day from a draught divine,  
 And still I pine, I pine, I pine!

O pale my lady, and were you death,  
 Kissing away the soul's own breath,  
 I would follow, for all cold Reason saith,  
 Even where Ruin raveneth!

## THE COAST OF CORNWALL

FOR me, true son of Erin, thou art rife,  
 Grand coast of Cornwall, cliff, and cave, and  
 surge,  
 With glamour of the Kelt. Strong sons at  
 strife  
 With wind and wave if healthier influence  
 purge  
 Not wholly yet from wrecker's blood, nor  
 merge  
 All in mild manners, yet there do not fail  
 Ancestral hero hearts and lives to urge  
 Their native virtue, that will never pale  
 In any strait, nor cringe, nor need to wear a  
 veil.

Tired hearts' refreshment, friend, glad life  
 was mine  
 Hearing rich music in Lamorna's bower;  
 And where thy whelming, tawny dunes incline,  
 Saint Piran! waveward, many a siren hour

Me and my village friend through shine and  
 shower  
 Crowned, pacing level sands by foamy flood;  
 Tintagel, thy dark legendary tower  
 Dreams o'er the seas of Tristram and Isoud;  
 By cliff and cavern gleam Romance's aery  
 brood!

Toward thee, wild Treryn Dinas, oft I  
 steer,  
 From whose weird form wake melancholy  
 wings  
 Of cloudy memories divinely dear;  
 Thou lookest all unutterable things,  
 Haunt of some mystic atmosphere that clings  
 From faintly-imagined, vanished Druid time,  
 While a low wind, like one demented,  
 sings,  
 Or murmurs a lorn, incoherent rhyme  
 Of mariners wrecked here since Earth was in  
 her prime.

I love Bedruthan's frowning, storm-swept  
 steep,  
 Saint Columb's minster-caverned purple  
 gloom,  
 Where bosoms of the babe-waves heave in  
 sleep:  
 Around Tol-Pedn's sombre height they boom;  
 Through tall fantastic arches glancing foam;  
 By grey Saint Levan, surge-ringed Rundle-  
 stone,  
 Whose bell wave-tolled hath learned sad  
 sounds from Doom,  
 How often do I wander all alone,  
 With quest bewildered hearing the sea's  
 monotone!

BALLAD OF THE DEAD MONK;  
OR, BROTHER BENEDICT

## I

THE monk upon the bier lies dead;  
 Seven tapers burn by him;  
 Robed brethren at the feet, the head,  
 Chaunt a low requiem.

## II

Deep gloom involves the vaulted church,  
 Save where the moon's pale face  
 Shows through unbarred doors of the porch  
 A misty mountain grace.

## III

He came, a knight of high degree,  
 His former life untold ;  
 The noble proud served lowlyly,  
 With thoughts that self-enfold.

## IV

Self-scourged in stony cells he prayed ;  
 Himself did sore afflict ;  
 Thorned sarks on delicate flesh he laid ;  
 Men called him Benedict.

## V

Or he would roam the lonely hills,  
 Where faintly floats the chime ;  
 An eyrie the far cloister dwells  
 Upon the crag sublime.

## VI

The brother came in bygone years,  
 A wild-eyed penitent ;  
 Now fasted for vigil, fasting, tears,  
 The brethren o'er him bent.

## VII

They kissed the hands, they kissed the feet ;  
 God dowers with gifts of healing  
 A saint so pure, for Earth unmeet,  
 Ripe for Heaven's revealing. . . .

## VIII

. . . Yet under the monk's shadowy cowl,  
 On that carven countenance,  
 Do writhen anguish, and a scowl  
 Mate with heavenly trance ?

## IX

*In pace requiescat !* roll,  
 O solemn, dirgeful sound !  
 Fill pause in prayer for human soul,  
 Vast torrent-boom profound ! . . .

## X

. . . What ails the body on the bier ?  
 What trouble shakes the dead ?  
 All shrink aloof, heart-chilled with fear !  
 The corpse, eyes open, said :

## XI

"By the just judgment of the Lord,  
 I am damned ! my spirit  
 For evil life now reaps reward,  
 Hell-fire my sins inherit.

## XII

"Mine own ill-deeds environ me,  
 Build dungeons of deep sorrow,  
 The live pit-walls laugh loud their glee,  
 Yesterday, now, to-morrow !

## XIII

"Ye lambs my selfish pleasure stained,  
 Who once were virgin snow !  
 O burden not to be sustained !  
 Pity ! I suffer so !

## XIV

"Nay, look not with your dovelike eyes  
 On me, your murderer !  
 The death-shroud o'er my spirit lies,  
 Your blood streams over her.

## XV

"O'er lonely realms I wander far,  
 Following a marish-gleam ;  
 Me ever the false elfin star  
 Eludes ; I do but dream.

## XVI

"O dreadful luring breasts and arms !  
 Witch banquets with no name !  
 Bondslave am I to baleful charms,  
 That feed on me like flame.

## XVII

"By ruined shores I rove alone,  
 Dull rain, storm-beaten brine !  
 By cliff and cave heart-broken moan,  
 Low light on the sea-line,  
 Dim, desolate, like mine !

## XVIII

" Mine own unquenchable desire,  
Ambition, lust, consumes,  
Clothes me with a shirt of fire ;  
I mourn among the tombs."

## XIX

. . . The phantom words were like a wail  
Of low wind in the vault ;  
Resuming, " May your prayer prevail  
To loose me from my fault ! "

## XX

They prayed ; less poignant grew the tone. . .  
. . . He seemeth to converse  
With one invisible, unknown,  
Who lighteneth the curse.

## XXI

A monk affirmed he saw and heard  
A semblance in the air,  
As of a child, pale, tattered, marred,  
Of aspect little fair.

## XXII

" Who art thou, dear ? " saith the dead brother,  
With accent marvelling.  
" Not know me ? left by mine own mother,  
You found me wandering.

## XXIII

" In that black bitter night of snow ;  
So faint I scarce may move ;  
Food, shelter, clothes, were mine with you ;  
And more you gave me—love.

## XXIV

" You took me home, and by your side  
Set in my rags and dirt,  
You found me friends ; I early died ;  
My father none shall hurt.

## XXV

" Thou father of my heart, so dear !  
I am but a poor child ;  
Yet I may use the Name they fear,  
These, lurid, and defiled.

## XXVI

" Avaunt, foul torturers, in the Name  
Of Him who died on cross !  
Now will I lead thee from thy shame,  
Although thou suffer loss.

## XXVII

" Fly with me where the healing streams  
From bloomy hills descend ;  
Where leafy groves with birds and beams  
Melodiously blend."

## XXVIII

The vision-gifted monk beheld  
What men by him discerned not,  
Whose eyes wide-wondering were held,  
A rigid form that turned not.

## XXIX

Transfigured was the common boy,  
The form grew radiant ;  
The face, a sunrise of deep joy,  
Like Christ, the child of want.

## XXX

Now one whom he hath injured most  
Brings pardon of her love ;  
The weak twain were a mighty host,  
And through great armies clove ;  
His own will heartened strove.

## XXXI

She came, the woman he did wound,  
Lay weeping on his breast ;  
She loosed him, in the grave-clothes bound,  
And lulled despair to rest.

## XXXII

Intent the straining senses drank  
Looks, words, of soft repose,  
And then poor eyelids gently sank,  
As when Love's fingers close.

## XXXIII

Each awed to his own cell hath gone ;  
Night folds the world in gloom ;  
The dead are sleeping still as stone ;  
So ends a tale of doom.

## SEVERN, FRIEND OF KEATS

SEVERN, dear Severn, friend of our boy-  
bard,

Thy hallowed offices of love for whom  
Through that long closing agony in Rome  
Outshine bright beams of great verse we  
would guard

Among the soul's regalia unmarred,  
Thy patient loving care in that dark doom  
That fell on Keats, the singer, doth illumine  
Our night of life above the noblest word  
Of noblest poet ; yet I love the boy  
Who sang and suffered, saw the glorious sight  
Behind the poor appearance, child of light,  
Told some of his high vision, nursed a joy  
Undreamed by those who stoned him, sons  
of earth,  
Denying, hating, envying his high birth.

## THE CALL OF THE CAVES

"WE allure you, lo! we call  
Into our storm-moulded hall,  
Where the emerald water-pulse  
Moves the laver and the dulse,  
Where swim cloud-white living gems  
Of dream-born form ; jade, amber stems  
Bud living flowers ; we liberal fling  
Live jewels o'er drowned queen and king,  
While the haughty heads of them  
With some consuming diadem  
Of clinging life we crown ; white limbs  
Our oozy robe corroding dims ;  
Ship timbers jammed between great stones  
Are mixed with fish-peeled human bones ;  
Grotesque mailed creatures sidle athwart  
From some dark cranny of their fort.  
Here the yellow sands are silting  
Over lips how lately lilting,  
Here the shadowy waters moving  
Over hearts how lately loving !  
Our lilac and our purple dye,  
Our shelly incrustations vie  
With gold embossed, rich broidery,

Fair spoil washed here from precious  
freight

Of that fair ship which bore the state  
Of royal pilgrim, guard and priest,  
Journeying to a marriage feast,  
And here by winds and billows broken,  
When the fatal word was spoken ;  
Where now in lordly isolation  
Our waters, after devastation,  
Wander with their wild, free voice,  
Causing wild hearts to rejoice,  
Wander through the lordly halls  
Echoing their lone foot-falls,  
Singing songs that charm and cheer,  
Warbled for no mortal ear ;  
Yet if one surprise their scope,  
He will be blessed beyond all hope.

Beyond the demon-guarded portal,  
Fashioned by no hands of mortal,  
Where towering monsters still as stone  
Hear old ocean's monotone  
Sound and resound for evermore,  
Watch the restless entrance-floor  
By rude purple rock roofed o'er,  
Whose rippled surface-hues invoke  
Memories of woodland smoke—  
Beyond where twilight water reaches,  
There be dim mysterious beaches,  
Whence should put forth some elfin bark  
To ferry pilgrims toward the dark  
Under a storm-wrought architecture,  
That fills the soul with strange conjecture,  
Where a courage-conquering sound  
Travels from the gulf profound,  
Like muffled thunder murmureth,  
As though some sea-god threatened death,  
Drowsy-souled, with bated breath,  
To whosoever dared intrude  
Upon his awful solitude !  
Here unhuman consciousnesses  
Inhabit green sea-drowned recesses,  
Clothed in a fantastic form,  
Native to the realms of storm,  
And ocean calm, the mystic deep ;  
Where many thrilling secrets sleep.  
Come and swim, or wade, or float,  
Bring the light, oar-dripping boat !

Here's rare fretwork, hued like wine,  
 More richly gemmed than storied shrine,  
 Or monstrance; clear piscina pool  
 With fairy lives made beautiful,  
 Finely frilled, and delicate tinted,  
 Or shyer beauties only hinted;  
 Here landwater ceaseth not  
 Dropping from the groined grot,  
 Whose tender fresh green ferns above  
 Look like a dream of virgin love.  
 We allure you, lo! we call  
 Into our storm-moulded hall;  
 Where the shadowy wave is still,  
 If you who are so weary will,  
 Crooning, we will rock to rest  
 In the twilight of our breast;  
 In sleep we would all ills disperse,  
 Crooning like some ancient nurse,  
 And dissolve the ancestral curse!

Yet there is one private gate,  
 Consecrate to royal state  
 Of ocean billows; there they dance  
 Buoyant under the sun's glance,  
 Clear-green, hilarious, in and out,  
 Foam-laughing, ever-fluctuant rout;  
 Fair traces of their blithe swift feet  
 In heaved long floating lines you meet,  
 Long loose lines of silver foam  
 Round high rock ramparts of their home;  
 O'er these faint shadows of the clouds  
 Slowly mount, like welcome shrouds;  
 Within the surges hold high revel,  
 All unaware of good or evil,  
 But what they do in that dim court  
 Is known to them who there resort,  
 And to none other; the rude arch,  
 Sacred to their sounding march,  
 So hewn as though the forked levin  
 Had been the norm for walls uneven,  
 Leans back upon the sheer grey crag,  
 Loud haunt of sea-bird, mer, and shag,  
 Or gulls that gleam in poised flight  
 About the grey cathedral height.  
 A herb-sown pentroof crowns the pile,  
 That doth the soaring eyes beguile  
 Aloft o'er what seems window vast,  
 Which Time, the old Iconoclast,

While the centuries rolled by,  
 Slow-fashioned there in irony  
 Of Gothic minster, Gothic creed,  
 Human worship, human need;  
 For there the wind sings all the psalms,  
 With the wave in storms and calms,  
 Whose congregations pouring in  
 Know nor penitence, nor sin;  
 There unseen they hold high revel,  
 No thralls to righteousness or evil.  
 Rich traceries on the cliff were wrought  
 By subtle hands with tempest fraught,  
 O'er that great Eastern front rust-red,  
 Grey or golden, high and dread,  
 Shagged with byssus like a beard,  
 Where the wild bird broods are reared,  
 Ere they assay their glorious flight  
 Round the blue-imbathed hoar height.

But that rude mimicry of fanes  
 The mocking mountain ill sustains,  
 With his huge protending flanks,  
 And the maned sea-surge in ranks  
 Chafing round his iron feet;  
 For such a part he's all unmeet!  
 Bastion, buttress, battered, bruised,  
 Spire with pinnacle confused  
 Were ne'er for human worship used;  
 Rough-hewn battlements and towers  
 Bewray the Elemental Powers!  
 Lawless, abrupt, their lines have nought  
 Of human; but the Genii wrought  
 Jamb, soffit, frieze, and architrave,  
 For giant porches of the wave.  
 The huge pile leans to view the sky,  
 And all his mighty lines awry  
 Reveal the mountain-irony;  
 So some huge Pagan, masked as priest  
 At a solemn Christian feast,  
 Might leer and reel, disguise let fall;  
 Stand revealed a Bacchanal!

. . . Here a boy who sought a nest  
 Was laid by reverent hands to rest;  
 In winter he was prisoned here,  
 Away from all who held him dear,  
 By ravening waves the loud winds churn;  
 To humble home they barred return.

Though he and his with longing eye  
 One another could descrie  
 Beyond the maniac revelry,  
 Of cold and drought they saw him die.  
 Surge batteries had availed to sever  
 By long, implacable endeavour  
 This arid isle from the mainland,  
 Save for one causeway ; none might stand  
 There when it was tempest-swept,  
 And the wild billows o'er it leapt.

Still they allure me, still they call  
 Into their storm-moulded hall!

### THE SPIRIT OF STORM

HAIL, royal ocean ! in thy presence-chamber  
 Arrived, I feel thy deep abounding life  
 Transfused into my blood, replenishing  
 My dwindling store ; alone, and at thy feet,  
 Dear as are human hearts, I am at home !

Sheltered within a cleft of the tall crag,  
 Granite of many delicate tints, I hear  
 The wind's vast voice make chorus with the  
 sea's,

Broken upon grim, dark rock-teeth below,  
 Ruins of the mainland ; neighbouring which  
 the shoals

Are green as beryl, wine-stained with the  
 weed

Of stone submerged ; one wrinkled indigo  
 Watery wastes aloof from shore, inlaid  
 With devious lines, like branching mercury.  
 The groundswell, sullen heaving, shows the  
 sea

Perturbed by rumours of far water-war.  
 Atlantic reigns immeasurable, alone,  
 Far as the weary wandering eyes can range,  
 Save for one ghostlike, mist-enshrouded isle  
 There in the offing, and more nigh at hand,  
 Yon brown sail of the bark that brought me  
 hither,

And bears dear comrades, great-limbed  
 fishermen,

Whose grave reserve derives from the stern  
 sea.

But westward from my lair the crags are  
 shattered

Into the semblance of a palace-fort,  
 Or temple hypæthral, tower and battlement,  
 Pinnacle, buttress, gurgoyled arch and spire.  
 Chasms yawn between twin walls ; one longs  
 to know

Where, and how far, into the mountain heart  
 They labyrinthine wander ; one would fain  
 Ask of the restless surge, or the wild bird,  
 Who are made free of them, who wander ever  
 Unchallenged in and out the sombre halls,  
 And corridors roofed over with wan cloud,  
 Ceiled with the storm-drift ! — Hurrying  
 vapours gleam

Anon with slant pale shafts from the veiled  
 sun,

Watery rays, that faintly fitful pour  
 A ruffled silver lustre on the deep,  
 Irradiating the white wings of mews,  
 That hover o'er the abysses ; but more bright  
 And warm this ardent beam from forth my  
 heart,

That blesseth and illumineth with love,  
 Beloved birds ! your multitudinous cry,  
 Music I dearly cherish ; far inland  
 Erewhile I heard the wail of one of you  
 Imprisoned ; mine eyes melted ; for there  
 flashed,

As though revealed in a dark night by  
 lightning,

Flashed unaware upon my sense within,  
 The vision of the glory of the sea !

Ye weave delightful motions in the air,  
 Passing, repassing ; call to one another,  
 And cherish in the abysses your brown young.  
 Now one alights upon the bounding wave  
 A moment ; now he cleaves the darkling air.  
 How the unfettered sweep of his poised pinion  
 Vies in majestic freedom with the fall  
 Of a blown billow in mid-ocean, driven,  
 Fierce-hounded by the blast ! the roller bows  
 With large, deliberate, imperial bend  
 Of haughty crest, and massy-muscled neck,  
 Neck clothed with thunder, as the Roman  
 fell,

Who in the Curia, at the feet of Pompey,

By treachery struck, fell, royal-robed, a king.  
So swings, so falls, the Atlantic wave to ruin,  
Smitten by immense vans of the strong south-  
west ;

For all is noble and grand about the sea.

O hymn sublime, confounded, infinite  
Of Tempest, how the chaos in my soul  
Responds to your appeal, and drifts with  
cloud !

I too am worn with many moods at war,  
Wind thwarting tide ; stern duty, passion,  
love,

Wrestle while, unresolved to harmony,  
They urge me blindly, violent, confused.  
The old-world order passeth, and the new  
Delaying dawns, one crimson, loud with  
voices

We know not, with wild wars in earth and  
heaven ;

The fountains of the great Deep are broken up,  
Threatening deluge ; our firm earth goes  
under ;

Even as well-beloved familiar stars  
Beneath the dusk horizon disappear  
For him who journeys over alien seas,  
For the ideals of our childhood change ;  
And as for such lone wanderers there rise  
Clear constellations all unknown, for us  
Ideas undivined of common weal ;  
New duties are the children of new needs,  
And wider wants ; yet in the onward way  
Stand venerable godlike forms opposed,  
Reverend from usage and dear memory.  
Young-faced ideals, rosy like the dawn,  
Beckoning promise joy, then eagerly  
We hurtle old familiars, while we wound  
Hearts well beloved, responsive to their call,  
And full-mouthed ardours of their warm  
embrace.

Then Conscience bleeds, for Virtue shocks  
with Virtue

And sweet Affection, on the embattled plain,  
While Passion raving more embroils the  
strife.

And what is duty, what is only pleasure,  
In the uncertain glimmer who can tell ?  
Tumultuous conflicts in the elements

Have counterparts more terrible within ;  
Those rend the body, these lay waste the  
soul.

One sees his brethren crushed to earth  
and maimed,  
Tortured, and slowly ground to powder,  
starved,

Harried by hard Vicissitude, or Man  
More cruel ; then he questions, doubts,  
denies

The omnipotent God of justice and of love,  
To whom he lifted childish hands in prayer,  
Taught by a sainted mother ; whom she  
trusted

Through a long life, and, dying, leaned upon.

We may not find the wholly excellent  
In frail mortality ; we vainly seek  
Or in ourselves, or others, for the type  
Which hides within the Heart of the Most  
High,—  
Foundation-stone of this inferior sphere.

More loudly roars the tempest in my soul !  
For all the creeds make shipwreck on grim  
reefs

Of iron Fact before mine eyes ; no charts  
Of olden time have laid them down ; dis-  
covered

But yesterday, the ravening surge for prey  
Claims the pale crews, who have embarked  
their all

On such frail planks, firm Faith, aspiring  
Hope,  
High confidence that all will yet be well.

Sheltered a little in the rude cliff-cleft,  
I sit and hear the turmoil of the storm,  
Where strange small fissures in the lofty crag  
Suggest dwarf homes of some weird troglodyte,  
Or dim cave-tombs of a long buried race ;  
While round white boulders near high-water  
mark  
Lie under ; ruin flings full athwart the stone.

I send my spirit adrift upon the storm,  
Careering along the triumph of the blast,  
Exultant ! well I know the living God,

God the creator, for destroyer too ;  
 Who purifies by hurricane, evolves  
 From birth-throes of rebellion, fraught with  
 fear,  
 Perplexity and pain, the common weal,  
 Raised to a higher excellence : wise measures,  
 With blind experiment, crude theory  
 Of men who deem that they initiate,  
 Yea, feel in them the mystical free-will,  
 Though whirled in broad winds of æonian  
 motion,  
 Wheeled in predestined orbits round their  
 sun,  
 All issue in the nobler type of Man.  
 Lo ! the World-Soul commandeth to emerge  
 From dead, resolved, more simple forms the  
 higher  
 Through pain, defect, death, folly, sorrow,  
 sin,  
 Compelleth all to be themselves, through all.

From thee, O mystic Mother, deeply dark,  
 From thee, O mother Nature, impulse floweth,  
 Urging mankind to launch, like wintering  
 bird,  
 Upon the unknown dim airs, by faith to find  
 Fair undiscovered realms beyond the dawn !  
 From thee the whisper, never disobeyed,  
 " Advance a pace into the Infinite ;  
 Claim young dominions from the formless  
 Deep ! "

For Man is child of Nature ; on her breast  
 He lieth ; she feeds him ; body feeds and  
 mind

From her more large, her all-involving soul.  
 Change wells from dark unfathomable Founts  
 Of Love and Wisdom other, more than ours ;  
 Ours a poor rill from these ; and therefore we  
 Must fail to comprehend them ; yet we know  
 Wisdom and Love are by the Antagonist  
 Absorbed, assimilated in far worlds  
 Beyond our knowledge ; though we travel  
 thither.

But who of us that loved would murder  
 one  
 Child by slow torture ? worse the Highest  
 doth

Through Man, through Nature ! or say that  
 he permits,  
 Who could prevent ! nay, freely choose your  
 horn !  
 Yet Reason proves Intelligence supreme ;  
 Not Force ; nor Chance ; unfathomable then  
 That all-wise Will, that moral character,  
 By the plumb-line of our intelligence.

I fling my heart abroad on waves of  
 pleasure,  
 For pleasure is a very friend of man ;  
 And yet would moderate, would guide my  
 course,  
 A calm, strong swimmer ; with a modern  
 mind  
 Float in the turbulence of revolution,  
 Challenge outworn, intolerable Wrong,  
 That may have been for olden times fair  
 Right,  
 And still, amid the clash of swords and sounds,  
 Forehear, enraptured, heavenly harmonies ;  
 In tattered, streaming banners of the cloud,  
 Marching to battle, would divine, foreknow  
 The vision of the firmly founded State,  
 The calm, eternal City of the Lord. . . .

. . . Huge purple phantoms, ash-pale  
 wings, wan, wide,  
 Are marshalled as for conflict ; and they  
 move  
 Momently changing their weird outline ; deep  
 Growls a far thunder ; lo ! a sudden glare  
 Within them tells of angers ; while the main  
 Reflects pearl, Tyrian dyes, chalcedony,  
 And opal, from the interspaces, clear  
 A moment, shining, delicately veiled.

The people now begin to reach warm hands  
 Of fellowship athwart the estranging bounds  
 Of sea and land, for mutual defence  
 Against the common tyrant, who can crush  
 Them jealous, disunited, one by one.  
 For mutual service are the countries linked  
 By thrilling nerves electric ; how they flash  
 With human feeling, swift intelligence !  
 While great fire-breathing vessels, throbbing  
 trains,

Hurry the many-lingued throngs from  
home,

With bales of produce for exchange, fair  
wrought

By whirling-limbed machines ; thus arteries

Are highways for the transport of supplies

To every several organ ; and the frame

Yields to imaginative informing thought,

That moulds a many-functioned manifold

Into one body from an embryo.

Confusion reigns for eyes that only view

Cells moving blindly through a tiny tract

Of tissue, seeming at cross-purposes ;

And so the Race, through varying minds and  
wills,

And clashing ends of personality,

Grows to one Body, after that fair Type,

In the eternal mind of the Most High.

For me, I would be faithful, point the way  
To heights communing with ethereal worlds,  
Though I myself should stumble on the spurs  
Far under ; yet in face of all their clamour  
Would save the Good uninjured ; but the Ark  
Is God's, not mine ; the whole wide world

His own,

How should He lose one single creature in it ?

All are in Him, and He abides in all.

Will not the Soul, in Her immortal flight

Along the ages, change Her loss to gain ?

But Virtue pushes from Her sepal-sheath,

Proving a prison, though it sheltered well ;

And in Her alien habit of the flower

Men may mistake Her for Her fallen fair  
sister.

I, when I dared presumptuous to ascend

The perilous heights of contemplation, left

Void windows of the outer sense ; but now

Keen glances filled them ; gazing, I beheld

The Emyrean wholly clear of cloud,

All azure, save for what appeared the wing

Of a great Angel, guardian over all,

Plumy, and soft, and full-irradiate,

Reaching athwart wide heaven ; until it  
grew

To some celestial armour, like chain-mail ;

Only the links were tender down, with blue

Between the interstices ; mild ocean under

Mirrored blue air, and alabaster cloud ;

It seemed as calm indeed as when of old

One stilled the angry waves on Galilee !

And all the storm was hushed within my  
heart.



MY SEA  
AND OTHER POEMS

1896



## MY SEA

### MY SEA, MY SEA

O MY SEA, my sea !  
From east to west thou callest me,  
From east to west I follow thee ;  
I of the homeless heart go home  
To hear thy lullaby of foam,  
Thou homeless sea,  
Whose dear voice hath no promise broken ;  
Of disappointing change no token  
Thy sweet monotony of sound  
Involveth, and thou callest me ;  
There's little human left so true  
As thy deep billowy breast of blue  
To lay the weary head upon,  
Whose earthly day is nearly done ;  
Thy crystal doors would let me through  
To the infinite beyond  
From this our life's too galling bond :  
Whether on the pebbly beach,  
Or on sand, thy tender speech  
Makes living music, or on rock  
The jubilant dear surges shock,  
I hear thy voice,  
And I rejoice,  
Who was so very full of pain,  
I deemed I could not smile again.  
They ask why — since I set my dwelling  
By thy billowy bosom swelling —  
I do not seek my holiday  
Inland : I know not what to say :  
Why I travel not inland  
Indeed I hardly understand ;  
But, O my sea, my sea !  
Mystic voices summon me,  
And, like a weeping child, I come —  
O sheen elusive, fluctuant foam —  
Where you sing your lullaby,  
There to live, or there to die.

Ah ! the fault is all in me,  
Who seek what here may never be,  
Who adore ethereal dreams,  
That lend our earth few fleeting gleams ;  
And yet I know one glimpse of Love  
Is more than mines or treasure trove ;  
But he hath swift wings like a dove ;  
Light-nets on clear-water sand  
Are less than Love's entangling band ;  
Silent, unaware they come,  
Silent, unaware, pass home ;  
But when Love flieth, when he fadeth,  
Pain grows for something that degradeth ;  
Thy shores are flecked with crimson weed,  
But Love's with drops from hearts that bleed :  
So for me, for me  
My lipping, leaping, laughing sea —  
My sea, my sea !

### INCONSISTENT

A PROUD man, I adore the lowly,  
Sinful, kneel before the holy,  
Unclean, fall prone before the pure ;  
Rebel, salute Who did endure  
Unmurmuring ; give blow for blow,  
Yet Him who, burdened with world's woe,  
Unmindful of His own, fell low,  
Glory to avow I serve ;  
And though men jeer, I will not swerve !  
Lord, take my heart, and open it ;  
Judge Thou if that be hypocrite !  
Gold, pomp, revenge, the sword, the drum,  
Scorn flaunted full by Christendom,  
In face of Him we feign to follow,  
And worship with lip-service hollow !  
Yet why take this mean Man for God,  
Unless for His poor, dark abode,

Where gloweth Love's eternal fire,  
 We felt some hidden deep desire?  
 We are captive, who would fain be free!  
 Soul of my soul, O Lord, deliver me!

### WILD LOVE ON THE SEA

"O SING to me, sing to me, foam of the  
 Sea,  
 Sing, while we sail, to my darling and me,  
 While we heel to the wind, the foam flies  
 from the bow,  
 My love laughs, we were never so happy as  
 now!

"We rush through the water, we scatter the  
 spray,  
 The foam-bubbles leap in the blue light  
 away,  
 My sails are less white than your bosom or  
 hand,  
 We will sail on for ever afar from the land.

"O dotards may mumble their winterly talk,  
 But the young joy of living their age may  
 not baulk,  
 We shall soon be beyond their bleak Northerly  
 Clime,  
 Who fain would persuade us that love is a  
 crime.

"Never fear, never fear, nestle closer to me,  
 O we joy to bound over wild waves and  
 be free!  
 For our bridal sing, winds! and, blithe  
 billows, your song  
 Breathe into your clarion loudly and long!

"Winds whistle, and fill the full-bellying sail;  
 Yea, what if they rise, and blow shrill to a  
 gale?  
 My boat is a rare one, she swims like a  
 bird—  
 Ha! what if the roar on the reefs may be  
 heard?

"You're the loveliest lady that ever was  
 known;  
 My rival I slew, and the bride is my own;  
 Warm bosom to bosom, hot mouth unto  
 mouth,  
 We are flying to lovelier lands of the  
 South. . . ."

"Nay, the sky's growing darker, I fain would  
 return——"

"Your doubts are too late, love, your scruple  
 I spurn;"

"I fear thee, I fear thee, fierce lover of mine;  
 Thy lips are the wild wave, thy breasts are  
 the brine!"

"Ho! with storm to the windward, and  
 breakers to lee,  
 They go swimming with Death, who go  
 sailing with me!"

### NOCTURNE

At the close of a day in December  
 I went by the winter sea,  
 And my soul was a fading ember  
 In abysses of immensity.

Then God spake out of the gloaming,  
 Where the wave gave over strife,  
 And fell, wan, feeble, and foaming—  
 "Man, what hast thou done with life?"

I was ware of a mournful throbbing,  
 Of a seapulse on the shore,  
 And I heard in it women sobbing,  
 Whom I loved and who loved me of yore.

In a rift of the cloudy distance  
 Lay blood from the fallen sun,  
 While the wind, with a low insistence,  
 Like a breaking heart moaned on.

O blithely the sun ascended  
 With carol of bird and breeze!  
 And now, his career being ended,  
 He fell through the leafless trees,  
 Amid sighing sounds of seas.

Do the life and the work fail wholly  
 For a man who hath lived and loved ?  
 Through the joy and the melancholy  
 With finishing hand God moved.

## AT Porthcurno

O RUDE cliff-castle pile,  
 O resonant shell-shore,  
 Your clear green waters smile  
 In sunshine as of yore,  
 Rebuffed from the grave granite rock  
 With many a frolic water-shock !  
 Their laughter glads your sand  
 With delicate white foam,  
 A dancing light green band  
 Under a deep blue dome.  
 It is the same blithe scene  
 Of wild aerial glee ;  
 But years have rolled between  
 My happy past and me !  
 And yet aloud I call,  
 In fellowship with all,  
 I catch my breath for joy  
 To see the wavelets toy. . . .  
 Till stabbed to the heart I fall,  
 Remembering my boy ;  
 For where the wavelets toy,  
 He did out-dance the hours,  
 Out-dance the briny brood,  
 Arrayed in soft sea-flowers,  
 While I defied the flood,  
 At flood-tide of my powers !  
 My forehead strikes the stone ;  
 Convulsed with sobs I moan,  
 Hear voices calling, "Come,  
 To rest beneath the foam !"

The day was even as this,  
 Heaven wore as clear a brow,  
 Sea and earth one bliss ;  
 Ah ! what is wanting now ?  
 The sunshine of the breast,  
 Youth more blithe than day,  
 Whose every wild behest  
 Unwearying limbs obey !

The presence of the child  
 That made my world so fair ;  
 From whose frame undefiled  
 The soul fled otherwhere !  
 O lilt of playful wave,  
 O dance of wild green billow,  
 Winning spells ye have,  
 Each following his fellow ;  
 Clash, confound your foam  
 In your aerial home,  
 Refluent from the stone  
 On following wave to run,  
 Immingling treble laughter  
 With his that follows after !  
 And yet surpassing this  
 Were peals of boyish bliss,  
 When he danced with you,  
 And laughed into the blue !  
 Ah, what a harmony  
 Were then the earth and sky !  
 Now too like a knell,  
 Wanting the master-spell,  
 Their music seems to fall  
 On a heart beneath a pall ;  
 For while live air I quaff,  
 I seem to hear him laugh  
 With the breeze and brine,  
 And, hearing him, I pine.  
 Yonder is the cot white-walled,  
 Where I brooded o'er my rhyme,  
 And the solitude ne'er palled  
 Amid the fragrance of the thyme  
 By wild wave and cliff sublime ;  
 Yet I do not love them less,  
 Now I feel my loneliness,  
 Nor brook that hurries toward the Sea,  
 To hide in His Eternity !  
 And mine are a few hearts who love  
 More than wastes of foam that rove !  
 But, ah, sweet sea ! you conquer me  
 With your unconquerable glee !  
 I plunge, do what you will with me !  
 Every fluctuant foam-blossom,  
 Glassed within a limpid bosom,  
 Foamy hair, dishevelled blown  
 In all the glory of the sun,  
 How ye race toward the shore  
 Immingling on a shelly floor,

Labyrinthine lines of light  
 Dallying with you in your flight,  
 While the gleaming birds above  
 Hover over fish that move  
 In the lucid realms they love.  
 Oh, how the young air abounds  
 With happy musical sea-sounds !  
 Waves are they, or young children's voices ?  
 The world is young ! my heart rejoices !  
 And surely he cannot be far  
 From here where such sweet voices are !  
 I will follow where you lead,  
 Flow over me, or wind your weed ;  
 In a cave I'll learn your rede ;  
 Where reposing at full length  
 I may recover youth and strength.

### EROS IN MAY

MAYBLOOM foameth pink and white,  
 Applebloom hath purple light,  
 Butterflies have fairy flight,  
 Leaves dally in their young delight.

Goldencups with burnished boat  
 On billowy verdure blithely float ;  
 In labyrinths under, dim, remote,  
 Daisy and speedwell blend their fine  
 Trebles in the joy divine,  
 While yellow-dusted bees hum over  
 Honied purple of the clover.

Soft, fertile gold fills every flower,  
 Birds warble and pair in every bower ;  
 We yield to Life's abounding power !  
 Now, or never, Love's full hour !

Laburnum burned in burning blue,  
 Windwaves o'er sheeny grasses flew ;  
 No blossom was more fair than you ;  
 Longing lips together grew !

Now warm kisses melt, combine,  
 Limbs are white and warm and fine,  
 Love is more than mantling wine,  
 All or nothing, lady mine !

*June 1889.*

### ISANDULA

NEAR the close of the dim day  
 That saw defeat of England's pride,  
 Two horsemen cleave their torrent way  
 Through the dusk overwhelming tide  
 Of those who hurl the assagai—  
 Ruin yawns above their ride,  
 Swarthy warriors mown like hay—  
 Carrying with them England's colours  
 From the field of death and dolours,  
 Riding from Isandula.

Never draw they bridle rein,  
 Followed by the loud pursuit  
 Their swift gallop burns the plain  
 Until either gallant brute  
 Failing with the mighty strain  
 Faints with ebbing life ; on foot  
 They take up the flight again,  
 Carrying with them England's colours  
 From the field of death and dolours,  
 After dark Isandula.

They have reached the swollen river,  
 Lurid twilight falls around,  
 One cries "Comrade, now or never,"  
 Both have plunged in the profound,  
 For the goal of their endeavour  
 Is to land on English ground ;  
 From their flag no fiend may sever ;  
 They will save old England's colours  
 From the field of death and dolours,  
 Flying from Isandula !

Two warriors on the further shore  
 Whose crimson glows with other red,  
 Gashed and waterstained and froze,  
 Their countrymen discover dead.  
 Our colours round their waist they wore,  
 Royal on their lowly bed !  
 England on their heart they bore ;  
 Wound in emblems of Her glory.  
 She remembers them in story,  
 Weeping for Isandula !

## MIDNIGHT

## I

BEWILDERED in a world of stars,  
 I wander in the dim midnight ;  
 November mist their glory mars,  
 Bare boughs relieved on doubtful light ;  
 I cower beneath the infinite.  
 Unseen one paces by my side.  
 The past gone far beyond recall !  
 Where now the laughter, joy, and pride,  
 Of life before the autumn fall ?  
 My heart lies under a dull pall.  
 Dear forms and voices of my dead !  
 Restore them, O thou milky way !  
 Serene you shine, though they are fled !  
 The maze of worlds, cold, awful, grey,  
 Abides unchanged, but where are they ?  
 I cower beneath chill eyes unmoved,  
 And like a lost child weeping go :  
 May hearts once loving and beloved  
 Be nought, while ye are all aglow ?  
 Nor you, nor them, nor self I know.  
 Where are they ? only wild winds wail,  
 Or wander moaning on the wold :  
 Far surges on the rocks are rolled :  
 Gloom-involving mind will fail,  
 And the warmest heart lie cold.  
 O whelming wilderness of stars,  
 Of whom some never spake to men !  
 Blind behind our mortal bars,  
 Dare we boast our eagle-ken,  
 Vaunt poor Earth the centre, when  
 Other reasons, rights and wrongs,  
 Joys, woes, battle-cries, and songs,  
 Reign yonder ? all-devouring gloom  
 Demands my soul to feed the tomb !  
 They darting rays of varied splendour  
 Mutual service royal render,  
 While evermore their lights advance  
 In solemn many-motioned dance.  
 The pageant of the illumined Past  
 Surrounds me in dim dream-array ;  
 Mine own, now vanished in the vast,  
 Once more I hear their voices say,  
 " Well-loved faces fade away :  
 We shall be like these one day ! "

We wonder at their funerals ;  
 To-morrow men will bear our palls.  
 Sure that we shall always grieve—  
 Ah, how soon the tears are dry !  
 Vowing we will always cleave  
 To one love only, how we sigh  
 At other feet, yea, lightly leave  
 Ere Death can hasten to bereave !  
 Poor broken wrecks of Love and Joy  
 Lie stranded on the shores of Time ;  
 Our Reason, a fool's broken toy,  
 Once loomed so wondrous and sublime !  
 Weak feet are ours yon heights to climb.  
 And O what puny hands to span  
 Twin spheres of nature, and of man !  
 One treads an insect into earth  
 Unheeding—ne'er a jest nor jeer—  
 Yet some inviolable hearth  
 Of private conscious life was here !  
 High Mundane Powers mock man's despair,  
 Who recked not even what we were,  
 But crushed us in their awful mirth.  
 Young Love, who leaps to life like Rhine,  
 Child of the hills, reverberates morn,  
 With laughter and with joy divine,  
 Exulting only to be born ;  
 He crowned, abounding, feeds with corn  
 The races, warms their hearts with wine,  
 Yet the Life that blest the lands  
 Dies dwindled in ignoble sands !

## II

She swathed him in his comforter,  
 And watched him down the miry street ;  
 The dreary dawn was all one blur ;  
 She heard the parting horse's feet.  
 He serves the milk from door to door,  
 The milkman his well-trusted friend ;  
 But the mother trusts him more  
 To One who knows nor change nor  
 end—  
 —The boy returns whom she did lend—  
 —But how ? knifed, mutilated, stark,  
 With foulest outrage done to death !  
 O power tremendous, dire and dark,  
 From Whom we all derive this breath,  
 (He slays, and He delivereth !)

Men owe Thee life and strength and food ;  
 Thou canst loose, and Thou canst bind !  
 Yet I will not call Thee good,  
 And I dare not call Thee kind—  
 Until Thou deafen and make blind !  
 Is our awful world endured  
 With Demon's heart, that pumps black blood ?  
 With sin, disease, and accident,  
 Thou doest what the murderer doth !  
 Amid wrecked trains burnt, scalded, rent,  
 Thou manglest babes of cherished growth !  
 To tell the horrors Art is loth.  
 Yoked to Hell's triumphal car  
 Toil we, prisoners of war ?  
 Ah, longer than my peers forlorn,  
 I held to what appeared firm hold,  
 But now wild winds and waves have sworn  
 The loss of one who seemed too bold ;  
 And, plunged in the abysses cold,  
 Over me their night hath rolled.

## III

And yet, what little hearts are ours  
 To hold the miseries of the world !  
 Behind our private belts of flowers  
 We play, nor view to ruin hurled  
 Our kindred ; till for us Death lowers,  
 And summons from the pleasant bowers.  
 Dare not forecast the Future—know  
 The doom that Fate reserves for you !  
 Look no World-Gorgons in the face !  
 Grisly Madness waits that way ;  
 Only help as help ye may !  
 We have to pass the loathly place  
 To reach yon heights of holy Day,  
 Serenely shining far away.  
 So we justify the Lord,  
 And kiss the terrible red sword !  
 Far throned in hidden eternal state,  
 Though wingless, desolate, she roam,  
 The Soul hath chosen all Her fate,  
 Now remembering not the Home,  
 Whereunto wealthier she will come.

If One who bore the wide world's pain  
 Heartbroken, blest and trusted God,  
 I may look up and smile again,  
 Kiss the plague-enravelled rod,  
 And follow where the Master trod.  
 Surely each is kin to all,  
 And man, a mirror of the whole ;  
 Should worlds, gods, demons, aught appal  
 Who knows himself a conscious soul ?  
 Give me but time, no bounds may thrall  
 One who hath God Himself for goal !  
 Ah, solitudes immense, profound !  
 And lonelier solitudes within !  
 Ye shine, O worlds, in solemn swound ;  
 All the discord, all the din  
 Of a city's moil and sin  
 Heard from a tower or higher ground,  
 Blend to one great ocean-sound ;  
 So from memories are lost  
 All we gladly would forget ;  
 Faces white with Death's deep frost  
 Lose the fever and the fret ;  
 So yonder orbs in darkness met,  
 Each a silver tranquil ghost,  
 Lose all of vext and tempest-tost ;  
 By mortal eyes undreamed in day,  
 Revealed alone to darkling night,  
 They rest so far, so far away,  
 I deem their calm and gentle light  
 For our consoling seems to say,  
 " Absorbed within the Infinite,  
 Deforming evils fallen away,  
 No dishonouring care can stain,  
 The Ideal only rule and reign ! "

Dear places, feelings, thoughts, will go,  
 Calm revolving worlds will fail,  
 But when the stars have ceased to glow  
 Abideth One who ne'er can pale,  
 And all in Him, immortal, hale,  
 Our Life, abide ; what'er remove,  
 Remaineth the Eternal Love ;  
 And surely Love will reunite  
 Who wander sundered here in night !  
 Surely Love will lead them home,  
 However far afield they roam !

*Begun November 1888 ; finished May 1889.*

# LIGHT LOVE BY THE SEA-GLORY

O LOVE, how the chorus  
 Of billowy laughter  
 Softens here for us,  
 And the winds' merry wafture  
 To a murmur subsideth,  
 Dulled by uneven  
 Cavewall that hideth  
 A span of blue heaven,  
 And sunflashing ocean,  
 Yet all in a minute  
 If you make a mere motion,  
 Your ear is full in it,  
 In the full tide of thunder  
 Sea pours in his joying ;  
 Even so with blithe wonder  
 A child who is toying  
 To a shell's heart may listen,  
 Hold the lips near, withdraw them ;  
 How the jewel waves glisten,  
 While sunny winds flaw them ;  
 Green billows are blending  
 Clear luminous bosoms,  
 Confusedly lending  
 One another white blossoms ;  
 Rank after rank they  
 On the sand fall in froth, or  
 Where iron cliffs flank, they  
 Rush athwart one another.  
 Grow transient fountains  
 Cloudily foaming,  
 Robe grim craggy mountains  
 Whitefurred with their coming.  
 Hear what a glorious  
 Wild warsong resounding,  
 As from ever-victorious  
 Hosts leaping and bounding !  
 Blue air is alive with  
 Young joy of their forces ;  
 Lo ! how they drive with  
 Tossed manes of white horses !  
 From flickering foam-blossom  
 Shadows are sliding  
 Down the waves' hollow-dome-bosom,  
 Gleaming and gliding,

Little shells on a yellow sand,  
 With a wave-damascening,  
 Little wells in the mellowland,  
 Eyes of deep meaning !  
 The glad ripple, in dancing  
 On the shore with a light froth,  
 In his footing and glancing  
 Leaves it marked like a night-moth.  
 Gems in the carmine  
 Of dim fretted hollows !  
 The cave is a starmine  
 Where the eye follows ;  
 Purple seaweeds are laving  
 In pure pools at leisure,  
 Languidly waving  
 With delicate pleasure ;  
 Fantastical arches  
 With cloud's wavy margin,  
 Where the ocean-wave marches,  
 Plumed cavalry charging !  
 You behold lonely islands  
 On the sea's azure through them ;  
 I feel they are my lands,  
 I a bird flying to them.  
 . . . If the wet sand be sinking  
 Under your frail foot,  
 That in water land drinking  
 Groweth down like a pale root,  
 Sit here on my knee, love,  
 'Tis firmer and drier !  
 Safe here will you be, love,  
 From seas that aspire ;  
 Ah ! let us enjoy, love,  
 The moment in flying ;  
 Even while we toy, love,  
 Daylight is dying !  
 Then will the hour come,  
 And touch with forgetting,  
 Stars over our numb  
 Forms rising and setting.  
 Alive the World-Wonder  
 Flames thundering onward,  
 And while we go under,  
 Earth sweepeth sunward ;  
 I acclaim the wild world-masque,  
 Who cease to be agent,  
 Who, faint with my furled task,  
 Fall out of the pageant !

## TO —

COMRADE beloved, and helpful soulfellow,  
 I fear lest that fine pallor I admire,  
 Wherefrom by twilight of the rosy fire  
 Your eyes, like stars in limpid water, glow,  
 From pain and frequent weariness may flow !  
 Ah ! more than one who loved me and my  
 lyre  
 Hath left me darkling, and hath risen higher ;  
 I pray thee, comrade, to abide below !

With tuneful voice, and with the Poet's heart  
 You sing to heal and gladden our sad time.  
 With Mary you have chosen the better part,  
 Shedding soul-rays upon our weary clime ;  
 Neither your friend will yield you, nor your  
 Art ;  
 He needs yourself, and she requires your  
 rhyme.

## TO —

## TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN

BUT once again, my spirit cries,  
 I would behold thy face,  
 Ere in the sunshine of thine eyes  
 I fade, nor leave a trace !

It was a dream, a lovely dream,  
 I lived with thee, my love ;  
 All vanished, like the foaming gleam  
 That on the wave may move !

There now remains in memory  
 Thine image, thine alone ;  
 My heart broods ever over thee,  
 And longs for thee, mine own !

## TO A COMRADE

HE said, " Now I shall go to sleep,"<sup>1</sup> and  
 died.  
 Ah ! brother, when shall we rest side by  
 side ?

<sup>1</sup> Byron's last words.

O God, O God, the duty is too hard  
 Ever, on every hand, Thy citadel to guard !  
 Yet, comrade, life is to be loved, and love !  
 Will not these two remain when all remove ?  
 However deep the abysses that divide,  
 However roars between the sundering tide !

## TO —

As one who rideth pale and weary  
 Through a barren lonely land—  
 While the dull horizons dreary  
 Around, one solitude, expand—  
 Finds unaware a limpid spring  
 Of warbling water on the way,  
 Lovely home of flower and wing,  
 Gentle bird and flitting jay ;  
 Parched lips unto the fountain cling,  
 In those wan eyes there dawns a ray,  
 New life to languid limbs they bring,  
 Chill October yields to May :  
 So thy brilliant bloom, thy prime,  
 To my heart was when I met thee ;  
 O passion flower from sunnier clime,  
 In memory's garland have I set thee !  
 Glorious gain, or honeyed harm,  
 Thine the subtle, witching charm ;  
 In thy large, thy limpid eyes  
 The labyrinthine mysteries.

*Aug. 9, 1893.*

## GREY EYES

LADY of the large grey eyes,  
 Limpid lakes, aerial skies,  
 Home of heavenly harmonies—  
 Like a bird, my soul takes flight  
 To lose herself in ample light,  
 Warm and deep and infinite !  
 Soundeth all the gloaming mine,  
 Where the living jewels shine,  
 Passeth happy languid hours,  
 Dreaming in the lovelit bowers,  
 Wanders meshed in mazy flowers !  
 Patience, Courage strong and true,  
 Pity dwells amid their dew,  
 Tender flower soft and blue.

Yea, from care for human pain,  
Weeping warm and gentle rain,  
You would even embrace your bane,  
Wanting only to sustain!  
Roused by wrong, the starry dream  
Veileth all her tranquil beam;  
Cloud-enshrouded lightnings dart  
Angers of a righteous heart!  
Hideth there an earthlier fire,  
To consume us on the pyre  
Of wild, flame-beautiful desire?  
I know not! only in your eyes  
Limpid, large, responsive, wise,  
Lo! my soul, a bird, takes flight  
To lose herself in ample light,  
Warm, and deep, and infinite!

*August '89.*

### MYSTIC MUSIC

FAINT memory of a dreamborn tune,  
Muffled low the music sounded,  
But the same air, reforming soon,  
More lovely, ever more abounded,  
Broke bonds wherein the silence wound it,  
Growing more articulate  
From hidden orchestras that mould it,  
Assumed a more majestic state,  
Labyrinthine flower unfolded  
Hourly by the breath of spring,  
Until the Harmony all glorious  
Rose on strong, expansive wing  
Dominating, pealed victorious,  
Erst budding, dim-divined thing;  
Now the elate exultant hearer  
Feels his heart arrived at home,  
While that pæan ever clearer  
With thunder-roll expands the dome;  
His heart, a royal-ported swan,  
Sails the sound, where wondrous vision  
As by some harbour-river shone—  
Dream-palace fronts, the world's derision,  
Deemed fancies vain! arow they flank  
The flower-terraced shore; but pinion  
Of the eagle-music sank;  
Fell from that sublime dominion.

So a fountain fails and flows.  
The organised high strain reverted  
To formless murmur whence it rose,  
The hearer's heart dropped disconcerted,  
The flower withered to a close;  
All the glowing glories faded,  
Common day oppressed the view,  
Dream-palace frontage blurred and shaded;  
And yet, ah yet, he hears anew,  
Evolving order from confusion,  
The rhymic travail throbbing low,  
Reforming kosmos; no illusion,  
Whatever comrades named it so,  
For he knew the breathing chorus  
Not from him alone did flow;  
Like spring-tides of the ocean, bore us,  
Pealing at full flood again,  
To goals beyond the primal strain,  
More vital even, rich, sonorous,  
Fed on failure, want and pain.  
He knew the anthem re-created  
Ever by the general soul,  
The human soul with nature mated,  
Who lives to organise the whole,  
That would fain evade control;  
So the God grows formed within us,  
And without us in the world;  
Till the spherul music win us,  
And our weary wings unfurled  
Young, unwearying, unhasting,  
Fulfil their high emprise, while resting.

*April 1893.*

### NATURA NATURANS

THE woodlands have a green world all their  
own,  
Young joy of life among the delicate leaves,  
To men who wander under them unknown,  
Where whispering Zephyr light and shadow  
weaves,  
And dewy-eyed blithe birds of various tone  
Thrid labyrinths illumined; singing heavens  
Their dewy bosoms while they charm the  
bowers,  
And gaily set a-swinging many a spray

With buoyant, swift caprices; tall beech  
towers,  
Mossed bole of mottled variegated grey,  
From thronging grasses flecked with sulphur  
flowers;  
Among the boughs a sweet perpetual play  
Of living things newborn; a mystic sound  
Pervades their interwoven sea-murmuring  
roof,  
Where love-built nests, where cooing doves  
abound;  
Of Love's high advent the young world gives  
proof;  
Love at full flood makes earth one holy  
ground;  
Love's hands aerial weave a wondrous woof  
Of melody and mystery Divine;  
So that I wish for my dear dead a dwelling  
No lovelier than this lovely land of mine  
When Spring arrives, and waves her wand,  
compelling  
A million blades and blooms to rise and shine;  
Yea, from sere leaf-lace, humid mould sweet-  
smelling,  
Life-feeding generations of the dead,  
Beauty and health are nourished with young  
joy.  
Here the veined fragile sorrel bells are fed,  
Whose leaf's a triple heart; babe roseleaves  
toy  
With hazel wands, wee crimson thorns they  
wed  
With wandering woodbine; leaflets tumble  
coy  
Out of pink winter-cots o'er one another,  
Rumpled and laughing; by sweet sun called  
early  
Obeying the dear still voice of their Mother;  
While infant ferns wake peeping, scaled and  
curly;  
Ruffled, fresh green leaf-sister calls to brother;  
The warm South shepherds showers mild  
and pearly.  
Here lady beech, embraced by her lord oak,  
Leaned in his strong rude arms, while well  
content  
Under their breaths young leaves immingling  
spoke

Softly, and then were silent, their souls  
blent.  
The ecstasy of nightingales awoke  
Within the downy-foliaged firmament;  
Rivers and lakes of hyacinths meander  
Among the teeming greenery below,  
Where many a humming velvet bee may  
wander,  
And the dew-elves' illuminations glow,  
'Mid tiny herbs, pale primrose, blue ger-  
mander.  
But those great aisles of pillared forest show  
Large open spaces, clear of trees, whose  
mast,  
And russet leaves of many years have browned  
Floors, only greenlit by young fern; here  
passed  
The storm's might, wrestling with the strength  
of crowned  
Tall forest kings, and bowed their pride at  
last.  
Yonder a piteous sight upon the ground!  
Huge oak that would nor bend nor break,  
uprooted,  
Though with prodigious talons it grasped  
earth,  
Deepbathed in Night; as high in Day fair-  
fruited;  
Dowered with a home inalienable from birth,  
It seemed for ever here; whose fall was  
bruited  
With league-wide tumult, when the storm's  
fierce mirth  
Hurled low the giant, and a wide wound  
made  
In rich brown soil; a very garden-space  
Of mould and stones the tree clutched as it  
swayed  
In that dread shock; there many a flower's  
fair face  
Peers now 'mid those great rent roots naked  
laid.  
The forest patriarchs live out long years,  
Their inner secret all unknown to man;  
They groan, they labour in the storm, with  
tears  
Of rain they twinkle, glow with light; but  
can

Any divine what feeling saddens, cheers,  
 What mind informs the inarticulate clan?  
 Nay, they are resting on their own calm  
 shade,  
 While men pine under them, men fume and  
 fret;  
 The gentle grass and flowers are ne'er afraid;  
 With dews, not tears, the woodland ways  
 are wet;  
 Though human hearts were broken while  
 they prayed,  
 Serenely breathed the wee wild violet.  
 Yon trees live out long lives; our genera-  
 tions,  
 Like their own leaves, rise, fall about their  
 feet,  
 Through periods; mere shadowed clouds  
 men fleet,—  
 While these drowsed Druid forms keep  
 wonted stations,  
 Lives individual, dynasties, and nations;  
 Their mystic souls and ours may never meet.  
 These have known rose-red youth, fair love,  
 young gladness,  
 Have seen Heartshine ascend the heavens  
 to wane,  
 Heard the blithe hunter's horn, bells toiled  
 for sadness,  
 Seen child grow man, then turn to child  
 again,  
 Stern, strong resolve fade out to halt, blind  
 madness.  
 Their peers in age beheld the Red King  
 droop,  
 His heart stilled by a random-glancing dart,  
 While pulsing with hot life, and loud with  
 hope;  
 Beheld the royal jester, lewd and swart,  
 Cower 'mid their boughs from that rough  
 Roundhead troop,  
 Questing like sleuthhounds under their green  
 heart;  
 Saw Henry hide his Rose-of-all-the-world  
 In bowers like these, lest Eleanor discover  
 The adored and dainty morsel closely curled  
 Away from her, fierce wedded hawk a-hover.  
 He found her slain, the nest to ruin hurled,  
 Then raving anguish burned the royal lover.

But yonder ants with their economies  
 Are every whit as wonderful as man!  
 For note how each his proper function plies,  
 Counting for world-crest his poor bustling  
 clan;  
 These have towns, loves, wars, long-drawn  
 histories,—  
 And famous bards, with critics born to ban!  
 Ah, men! your laughter-moving airs and  
 graces,  
 Your fond assumptions of authority,  
 Seem antics to the calm eternal faces  
 Regarding you from yonder world-eyed sky;  
 For haughty gesture, proud look, royal  
 paces,  
 Turn palsy, rheum-drops, flotsam idling by!  
 Leaf-filtered sunshine lies upon the moss,  
 Between cool shadows, like a tranquil  
 blessing;  
 The exhilarated merry branches toss  
 Their newborn leaves in azure air caressing;  
 With red-tipped daisies, cups of silver gloss,  
 Young Spring the wrongs of Winter is  
 redressing.  
 Harken! what passion-hearted wealth of  
 song  
 With fire-spray, mazy blossom, thrills the air,  
 Vieing a moment with more during throng  
 Of budded plants, that make wood-floors so  
 fair;  
 From fountain-stems of pining low and long  
 Flies many-spangling rapture rich and rare.  
 The solemn-pillared aisles are misty-dim  
 With distance; their moss waves are green  
 and brown;  
 All blends with the sweet mood of her and  
 him,  
 Whose fair young forms are lying listless  
 down  
 Under a forest lord of giant limb,  
 His dragon roots around their beauty thrown.  
 They leaned anear a stately tower of beech,  
 Against a caverned ruin of old oak,  
 Where nestling very closely each to each,  
 They were so happy that they seldom spoke,  
 Silently waiting for dear Love to teach;  
 Whose breath was gentler than mild airs  
 that woke

In festal foliage, tenderly defined  
 Athwart the still blue waters of a lake,  
 A woodbird's flight away, where moorhens  
 find  
 Their reedy home; with flash and plash they  
 make  
 Warm stillness sweeter for the twain reclined,  
 As o'er the water their glad way they take;  
 And yet anon a harmless sylvan sound  
 Of squirrel, bird, or restless russet leaf  
 Startles the timid hearts with sudden bound—  
 They fear some coldly-prying human thief  
 May snatch the bliss wherein they both are  
 wound,  
 So rich and rapturous, albeit so brief!  
 Fair woodland labyrinths weave green lithe  
 arms  
 To roof the curly head of either lover,  
 And downy leaves are whispering soft charms,  
 While to and fro the nimble Ariels hover,  
 Fanning desire that never dreams of harms,  
 Whatever sword unseen be hanging over.  
 Fine limbs, fair undulating delicate flesh,  
 Invite to joy the solitude allows,  
 While vital sap that rises pure and fresh  
 Challenging calls the kindred blood which  
 flows  
 In their warm veins; sun weaves a glowing  
 mesh  
 With foliated shadows on the smooth, white  
 skin;  
 From Pleasure's mantling bowl the ripe lips  
 quaff;  
 They hear the cuckoo call leave off, begin  
 Ever afresh, doves coo, and the wild laugh  
 Of woodpecker, tit's tinkle clear and thin,  
 Yet for a moment they observe what half  
 Alarms; it stares, they deem, with spectral  
 scowl,  
 A dwarfed, deformed trunk, huge-girthed,  
 mouldering, dark,  
 By Heaven's bolt blasted; a monk's shadowy  
 cowl  
 It seems to wear, one blackened arm stretched  
 stark,  
 As in denunciation; a grim ghoul  
 Head-tentaced, with fungus-blotched rude  
 bark,

(In such a scene the Druid poured young  
 blood!)  
 But not one leaf upon its monstrous age;  
 This chilled their hearts a moment as it stood  
 In dead brown drifts, an evil-threatening  
 mage;  
 Yet subtle spells rose from the breathing  
 wood!  
 The caterpillar in a fine silk swung  
 From frondage o'er them, hued like pale  
 green jade,  
 While flower-bells a fairy peal faint rung;  
 In leafy cradles the aurelia swayed,  
 And now the lovely lovers closer clung,  
 Feeling a summer-sense in all the glade . . .  
 But far away one heard the woodman's axe  
 Splinter the cream-white, fragrant woods  
 resounding;  
 Muscle-ridged arms, and supple stalwart backs  
 The man-surpassing years of trees are round-  
 ing;  
 So God, the woodman, clears the space He  
 lacks  
 Among His men and women, too abounding;  
 To warm Himself the human faggot stacks.  
 Is it Dame Nature's frolic thus to dangle  
 Baits She who made us knows we can't resist?  
 Set Conscience and blind Passion all a-jangle,  
 Then frown because we have too hotly kissed,  
 And done her bidding; bad folk will she  
 mangle?  
 Nay, for Her mills use bad and good for  
 grist!

## I

'Mid gorgeous autumn gold she creeps to die;  
 All the deep forest burns with wondrous fires;  
 The low red sun glares like God's angry eye  
 Through black contorted boughs, whose leafy  
 lyres  
 Are muttering veiled oracles on high—  
 While she flits haggard through rain-sodden  
 mires,  
 Her heart a-flame; wild-eyed and pale she  
 fares;  
 The branches pluck at her the while she goes;  
 Few songsters warble where the hectic flares,  
 But on a winedark bramble the wind blows

Some soft grey down, blood-reddened; an owl scares

Her hooting from the hollow oak; she knows That place too well; the lake is at her feet, Where he and she lay lapped in heaven's bliss; Dimrobed in cloth of gold those beeches greet Her, stately curtseying; dusk waves they kiss, In carmined mirrors their own image meet, Whispering "Maiden, here your haven is From the hard world!" dense-thronged around the lake,

Whereon there lay a kind of oily scum.

A misty phantom brood; she deemed they spake,

"Poor child! and can you hesitate to come, When Love and all your cruel race forsake, Where kind Oblivion offers you a home?"

The tall grey heron in chill twilight stands Unmoved as stump or stone, until it hears A splash, a human cry; the form expands Wide wings; a grey ghost flies; she disappears;

The water-rings grow large.

—One roamed the strands,

Days after, a young man beset with fears For her strange flight; he saw above the water At dusk a pale light by the sighing grove; Upon him wandering the labourer's daughter, Missed from her home, flashed unaware, his love,

Though she loved a young noble; her self-slaughter

Will soon be plain when that dread treasure-trove

Grim grappling-irons labouring up-buoy, An awful formless burden which was youth, Inanimate dim chaos which was joy!

## II

But ah, the cruel vision, void of ruth, Shifts now the scene, to show love's brittle toy Broken, 'mid direr death's-heads of dull truth! See those once lovely lovers walk the earth, Still side by side, for both are living yet. Yea, they were married; but the morning mirth

Hath yielded to chill rain, and dull regret. In the gaunt winter woodlands there is dearth

Of life and song; in those twinned hearts who met

To dance at early dawn, there dance grim Death

And pale gaunt Horror, with a ghastly motion;

For now no dear enchantment of Love's breath

Transmutes dull Fact (as when through some clear ocean

Plain weeds form lambent fairy realms beneath);

But they have drunken Time's belittling potion,

And through once warm veins creeps the wintry frost

Of age, indifference, disillusionment,

Wrath, hate; each droopeth, a tired haggard ghost;

Poor cankering cares for trivial things had blent

With these to wither hopeful buds that, lost, Can ne'er form fruit now; so, wan eyes downbent,

They fare upon life's dreary barren road, Snows of deep winter on bowed heads and hearts,

As on bare-boughs that groan beneath their load.

Ah! but the acorn dropped in summer starts A winged green seedling from its blind abode Of burial in kind earth; and sleep imparts For renovation rest; the workworn dead, Who only longed to cease, have found more life

Unwearying; and hearts who once were wed (So Faith low-breathes, with strangling doubts at strife),

For all change, failure, torpor, wounds that bled,

In sunnier climes will grow true man and wife. What shocks the best in us can ne'er be true, Nor aught unlovely, save in outward seeming; These are the larval Virtues that endure

Slow ripening perfections richly teeming; They wore another aspect while they grew; But Sense may prove less near the Truth than Dreaming.



UNPUBLISHED POEMS



## UNPUBLISHED POEMS

### BRIDAL SONG

*(Sung by children strewing flowers,  
Exton, June 12, 1862.)*

#### I

DEAREST lady, loved of all,  
Gifts undying, rich and true  
O'er thy path kind Heaven let fall,  
More than fading flowers we strew !

#### II

Since thou hast not sought thine own,  
Wants of others sweet supplied,  
Our Great Father's care is shown,  
Making thee a happy bride.

#### III

Take her, Bridegroom, shield her well,  
Treasure of ours resigned to thee ;  
On you both Christ's blessing dwell  
Now and through Eternity !

#### IV

If some fleeting shade o'erwing  
Life's fair sward of smooth green gold,  
Startle not, but closer cling—  
Lo, He smiles behind the fold.

### TO J. H.

*R.I.P.*

COMRADE, my comrade, they are calling  
names  
Of epoch-making men about the town  
Who died but now ; and these are nought to  
me,  
Who mourn my brother, lowly, poor, un-  
known,

Dead with them in thy manhood's flower ;  
thee Death

Took using all thy strength to wrest a friend  
From his cold clutch ; but he would take  
you both.

No famous man hath ended better ; God  
Approveth, and thy comrade honours thee,  
True child of ocean, whom wild wind and  
wave

Bronzed with much kissing, claiming for  
their own ;

Convivial, improvident, free-handed,  
Who more than once plucked human lives  
from waves

That would have whelmed in their tre-  
mendous play.

But life, alas ! proves often hard to bear  
For such as you, one warfare grim and long  
With famine, daily want of those who lean  
On you for daily needs, your children, wives ;  
And so, may be, the horror of cold gloom,  
That unaware enshrouded my poor heart,  
To thee was but the long-delayed, blithe sail,  
Scarce hoped for, dawning on the mariner  
Who thirsts and hungers on a sullen sea :  
For niggard Life had used thee hardly ; Death  
Relieves from burdens unendurable.

But, ah ! my friend, I may not see thee more,  
Nor hear, nor feel ! whom now in this my  
dwelling

The very rooms with their appurtenances,  
Inanimate and trivial, recall ;  
The frame well-knit, well-moulded, the deft  
hand.

That so disposed them even now ; yon beach  
That strews my garden speaks of thee  
Who brought it ; still I seek a face well-loved,  
And listen for a well-remembered tone

Upon the stairway, in my private chamber ;  
 Ah ! who will do thine office for me now ?  
 Nay, we may never more climb waves to-  
 gether

In bounding boats, nor ply the limber oar  
 Among those bounding billows : but I roam  
 Heart-wounded in chill twilight by the shore,  
 Like him of old of whom blind Homer  
 sang,

How, reft of one he loved, disconsolate,  
 He went in silence by the sounding sea :  
 I hear that rhythmic breathing of the sea  
 And evermore the surge repeats thy name.  
 Even so Achilles mourned his friend  
 Patroclus,

So Alexander wept Hephaestion.

O may thy soul repose in peace, my friend,  
 Nor any troubled dream disturb thy rest ;  
 But from a maze of tranquil reverie  
 May one remembrance, light as a rose-  
 petal,  
 Float to my world and wandering to me  
 Here by my side assume the form beloved !

BRIGHTON, *October 1891.*

### WRECK

THE wind is roaring in the pine to-night,  
 The demons howling in the chine to-night,  
 A terrible unrest is mine to-night ;  
 Wild surges leap the boulder.

There's wreck on the roaring reef below  
 And wreck in a heart of grief below,  
 Love's bark, whose flight was very brief,  
 lies low ;  
 Night's wild whirled gulfs enfold her.

Foam's faery chimes were rung in the  
 morning,  
 Love floated young and fair in the morn-  
 ing ;  
 On sunny sands was he flung, and lovers  
 clung, in the morning ;  
 Now Night's wild hollows hold him.

### MERELY FRIENDS

WE dwelt awhile in heaven, my dear,  
 And paid for it full well,  
 For soon the gods from jealous fear  
 Sent us down to hell,  
 Banished us to hell, my dear ;—  
 But after tears and mirth  
 How dull to live on earth, my dear,  
 How tame will seem poor earth !  
 Ah ! me, the pain, the triumph ends,  
 And we shall meet as merely friends.

### SEABIRD OF THE BROKEN WING

SEABIRD of the broken wing,  
 For you no more wild wandering !  
 Soaring heart and tameless eye  
 Woo passionately sea and sky ;  
 Even as of old you long to fly ;  
 Ah, never more ! O child of air  
 And ocean, now let dim despair  
 Close your lids, lie down and die !  
 For what may homely Patience bring  
 To soothe the bird of broken wing ?

*October 1890.*

### "YE, LOVERS TWAIN"

YE, lovers twain, went home  
 Through tender deepening night,  
 But all your life to come  
 Looked to you one light.

One light indeed it is,  
 Or may be, if ye will ;  
 Nay, trust your Lord for this,  
 In weal, in woe and ill.

For Night herself hath stars  
 More glorious than the sun :  
 Behind our cloudy bars  
 They are shining on.

Go home, dear hearts, in peace  
 Athwart the twilit land ;  
 Forest leaves ne'er cease  
 Soft sounds on either hand.

And if a tear fall low  
 From me who have lived long  
 For loves of long ago  
 Earth no more may know,  
 Faith sings her under-song ;

" They only seem to die,  
 God numbered all and knew ;  
 Beautiful they lie  
 In calm eternity,  
 Alive and fresh with dew."

*September 1889.*

*(Reprinted by permission from  
 "Leisure Hour.")*

### ONLY A LOCK OF HAIR

I FOUND, within a secret drawer  
 Of mine old ancestral home,  
 In the wing with ages hoar  
 Where the living rarely come,

A lock of young unfaded hair,  
 Tied with tiny crimson cords,  
 Hidden safe by loving care,  
 With some nearly faded words

On the paper that enfolds ;  
*I will nevermore forget.*  
 Oblivion impassive holds  
 That scroll, with memories once wet.

There remaineth ne'er a clue  
 Whose fingers pressed the damp-blurred vow,  
 Nor to whom he would be true ;  
 If he kept or broke it, now,

Who can tell? No gleam, no flash,  
 Divides the darkness of the past ;  
 Some loving hearts burned out to ash ;  
 We know not more ; ours follow fast.

One bent o'er his dead darling wild,  
 Found the sun grown cold and dim ;  
 Or a mother lost her child,  
 And knew her life gone out with him.

Or youth divided from his May,  
 None knowing how the twain had loved,  
 Compelled to journey far away,  
 Ere Death more far apart yet moved  
 Their loves, hid here that lock one day ;  
 Or perchance he faithless proved,  
 Forgetting where the token lay :

For boys, who roam about the world,  
 Finding many lovely maids,  
 Remember not the early curled  
 Fairy gold in folded braids ;

Or of that primal honey hived  
 Death robbed him, of the priceless pearl ;  
 But he for consolation wived  
 Once more, then hid love's own young curl,  
 Till, growing old, Time's fool survived  
 Desire for pelf, or power, or girl.—

O pitiful, soft human hair !  
 Shall I drop you in the fire ?  
 Will some ghost haunt me if I dare  
 Or do the dead forget desire ?

Live human gold, I will not scatter ;  
 Winds, or hands unscrupulous  
 Will treat you as superfluous matter,  
 Poor hair unknown, void, vain to us !

These pale love-letters that I burn,  
 What a cherished sacred trust  
 Of fresh young heart to heart we spurn—  
 Hot hopes, and fears that seem but dust !

Ah ! sad as a neglected grave,  
 Where the indifferent stranger wanders,  
 Where Time and Chance join hands and rave,  
 Emperor Death's immortal panders ;  
 The good, the bad, the fool, the brave,  
 Our tears, our laughter, all He squanders.

## THE BABES IN THE SNOW

Two little children seek their home  
 Within the folding hills;  
 From yon far village school they come,  
 Blithe babbling like two rills.

Earth shines and sparkles to the sun,  
 Blue airs are keen and bright;  
 The children's shadows while they run  
 Grow long behind their flight.

Now eddying snow-feathers fall;  
 The rosy children play  
 With flakes that soon will prove their pall,  
 Dark drifting o'er their way.

They flounder helpless in the snow,  
 Unheard their piteous cry,  
 Drowned in blasts that round them blow;  
 No mother's help is nigh!

As robin buried under leaves  
 Lost babes within the wood,  
 Snowflake a winding sheet soft weaves  
 For these, the pure and good.

Now they are lying breast to breast,  
 Poor fluttered hearts are still;  
 The babes arrived; they found their rest  
 In Homes beyond the hill.

## FLOWERS AT EASTER

A ROSY sunbeam glides the maid,  
 While youngling flowers are waving round  
 her;  
 Earth in flower-songs conveyed,  
 Silent songs, the joy that found her,  
 Awaking from the sleep that bound her;  
 Rapture fills both shine and shade.

Souls we love, like flowers, have broken  
 From our dim dreamland's wildering prison;  
 With One, the fairest, earliest token  
 Of our immortal life, have risen.

Soft eyes within the woodland scene,  
 Dewy, gleaming, open stilly,  
 Violet, bird, celandine,  
 Anemone, primrose, lentlily.

Winter was the nursing-time  
 For bird, for delicate leaf or flower;  
 Souls lie darkling now, their prime  
 Yet lingers; full-unfolding power  
 Will weave the amaranthine hower  
 That heareth low ethereal chime.

1891.

## THE DEATH OF TENNYSON

THE last of all our mighty bards is low,  
 And who is left to wear the conqueror's  
 crown?

Bays all too ample for a lesser brow.  
 I mourn the Master-singer and the friend.

In at the oriel, as he passed, the moon  
 Shone at her full; the stars looked; but no  
 light

Kindled by human hands confused the beam  
 Wherewith God ushered him to worlds un-  
 known,

After the day's long task, accomplished well.  
 He with the failing sense of one who faints  
 From life to life beheld them, and the  
 lands

In elf-light lying, field, moor, autumn wood  
 Meet emblems of a fortune-favoured life,  
 And ordered art, a fair, serene domain.

So that loud-pealing thunderstorm which  
 rapt  
 The eagle soul of Byron from our ken  
 In yon far land, in Greece, with birth-throes  
 torn

Of revolution, 'mid the clash and clang  
Of turbulent war, was emblem meet for him,  
Who from hot heart and idol-shattering soul  
Rolled the wild torrent of impetuous song,  
'Whelming old landmarks; exile young and broken,

Whose dying lips might frame not their last wish

To that one hired dependent; ah! not so  
Our later master, Tennyson, went forth  
From us but now; for he, from that pure home

Deserved success had made for him, went forth,

Whispering words of love from his true heart  
To her true heart who loved him through the years,

One hand on the dear volume he had opened,  
His Shakespeare; slept, well worn with noble use,

Gently as when a child he fell asleep,  
His mother keeping her love-vigil o'er him.  
Then the moon hallowed that sublime repose,  
As of pale marble in cathedral gloom.

1892.

*(Reprinted by permission from the  
"Nineteenth Century.")*

## THE SONG OF TENNYSON

His song's abounding, clear, and tranquil  
river

Flows through the land, beneficently broad,  
Flows fertilising; mirrors in its journey  
Whate'er pertains to our imperial race  
Of a most ancient Order's pillared state,  
Time-tinted Custom, firm palatial Law,  
Reverend spires of hoar consoling Faith,  
And comfortable homes of wedded Peace  
On daisied lawn a-flower; the grange, the glebe,

The lordly park, where wander English girls,  
Beautiful, pure, in play linked, or with youths,  
Ruddy and stalwart, loyal gentlemen  
Of cleanly life, their lovers; village maidens;

Bucolic men, dry humour in their talk.  
His flowing music haunts the murmuring  
grove,

Full-flowered meadow, fields alive with corn,  
The gentle hills and dewy vales we love,  
Where dainty, delicate birdnotes meander,  
With lyric warble of the woodland rill.

More subtle-toned than bird, or rippling rill,  
This human strain of Tennysonian song.

Our loveliest looser of brief flights of song,  
Free-floater of toy navies of light ditty

Was he, on whose deep, ample-bosomed river  
Of clearest English undefiled there shine  
Barges richwrought from realms of old  
Romance,

Carrying goodly crews of armoured men,  
With armour chased, enamelled in bright  
hues,

Fair dames in samite raimented; the knights  
Have port of heroes; holy fires illumine  
Their eyes, on quests ideal bound; behold!  
Guinevere, Arthur, Galahad; and poised  
Over fantastic gold of dragon-prows  
A wondrous Vision, like the Holy Grail!

But these there follow gallant ships that  
sail,

Or steam, from English harbours proudly  
launched,

In the full searching light of History,  
With scarlet clothed, and blue; their com-  
panies

Show mettle high, indomitable; aims  
Heroic throned on homely weathered faces

Of soldier, sailor, who hath greatly dared  
For England; grand as any Lancelot,  
Or Arthur, knights, who loom through mists  
of time,

And myth colossal. Ah! what glows of  
colour,

As from deep-burning airs of orient,  
Emblazoning the limpid lapse of song!

Dream figures from the legendary past,  
Awake to our new Merlin's waving wand,  
And forms familiar of fair famous women  
Are mirrored lifelike in the magic glass,  
Each at the flowering moment of her fate,  
The soul-disclosing hour of her career.

But now Night falls, and starlight flickers cool  
Upon the stream ; some piercing tragic cry  
From sorrow-rended, living human heart  
Disturbs that even flow of the wan water,  
And some far sound of rapids breaks the calm.

Then wails a dirge of solemn measured woe,

And wildered question ; yon dark Infinite,  
With subtly-woven mysteries of cloud,  
Descends within the bosom of the wave,  
And hallowed Wisdom finds her dwelling there.

Pale twilight dawns, as of a rising moon,  
While Faith uplifts faint pinions of the dirge

That drooped so wearily—the moon hath risen

Upon our Bard's last slumber ! lo ! how grand  
He lies, pale marble, warrior gone to rest,  
Black-bearded, stately-featured, lofty-browed,  
The long life-battle fought, the victory won.

1893.

(*Reprinted by permission from  
"Leisure Hour."*)

## THE SIGNALMAN<sup>1</sup>

### I

THE signalman at Manor House,  
A guiltless instrument of evil,  
Should pity in kind hearts arouse,  
Made a cat's-paw for the devil !

I deem the Fates were very hard  
On the signalman that night ;  
First, his needed rest they marred ;  
Next, they killed his heart's delight,

His baby Rose ; then they denied  
To him, themselves had made unfit,  
Reprieve from duty, though he cried  
To be relieved that once from it ;

So drove the rushing train to doom,  
And that one broken man to gloom  
Of vain self-torment : oh ! great God !  
Didst Thou not drive us where we trod ?

### II

In tear-choked accents hear him tell  
How, coming from the iron road  
That morning home to where they dwell  
In their small orchard-girt abode,

His wife and family, he learned  
From her that something ailed their Rose :  
But, since who works by night hath earned  
The daytime's leisure for repose,

" Let the child lie snug with me,"  
He bade ; " for school make ready Ted :  
You can bring me up my tea,  
Then take our Rosy from my bed."

But four bare hours of sleep are all  
The weary signalman can steal ;  
For then he hears his wife loud call  
She fears poor Rose is very ill.

So he must tramp the country round  
To find a doctor, if he may ;  
Yet ne'er a one the father found ;  
And the child lay cold and grey

On his return ; the wife declares  
That she can never bide alone  
With that dead darling child of theirs  
In the house, when he has gone,

To-night ; he walks to wire the news  
To his old mother ; " Take the train  
At once, and come to wife," he sues ;  
Then, fearing the unwonted strain,

Next he seeks the station-master ;  
" I'm in bad fettle for my work,"  
He tells ; and why he dreads disaster,  
If unrelieved ; " yet I'll not shirk,

" In case you find no substitute."  
Alas ! not one to take his place.  
But, after having urged his suit,  
Home again with quickened pace

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the railway accident at Thirsk, 1892.

He walks to comfort his poor Jane,  
And find a neighbour to sup with her  
That night, in case the expected train  
Should bring no mother; hastening thither,

Among the new arrivals her  
He finds not; therefore, heavyhearted,  
From that station-platform-stir  
He, weary, full of care, departed

For his post, the signal box;  
Tries to think of trains, and lever,  
And semaphore, and signal blocks,  
Using all his best endeavour

Not to fret for wife so ill,  
Or little Rose so sudden taken,  
With all her merry prattle still:  
"I'm drowsy, but this tea may waken!"

## III

It was a cold November night.  
Now and then the fog in drifts  
Enshrouded the glass cabin bright,  
Whose fires made moonstone glows in wefts

Of wandering vapour; all went well  
Until the earlier Scotch Express,  
One chaos of blurred lights and steam,  
With earthquake tread rushed past; "I bless  
The Lord because so clear doth seem

"My head now; I have entered all  
The signals in my book, the trains—"  
Then, mocking him, the shadows fall  
All unaware; nought clear remains;

For though he raised the danger red  
When that first "passenger" went by,  
Sleep held him bound in bonds of lead  
Ere the fatal "goods" drew nigh;  
Which, finding the line blocked, stood still.  
He hears no snort, no lumbering tramp,  
No clash and clang! *there* halts, to kill,  
The shrouded Terror, with red lamp  
Threefold at tail of it, that feigns,  
Dim-burning baleful through the damp,  
To warn the doomed onrushing trains.

Head fallen on his arms he sleeps,  
By the gleaming, levered frame;  
A needle clicks, the clock's hand creeps,  
Flaps the cabin's coalfire flame.

While yonder train swings, sways and leaps,  
Bounds eager, urged by Destiny,  
By sleeping home, and leafless tree,  
Through the mist-enfolded gloom,  
With wailing winds on ruined lea;  
Who voyage in yon cars of doom?

The child sees visionary toys,  
While Ambition's air-wrought scheme,  
Or lighter bubbles' fleeting gleam,  
Amuses older girls and boys;  
Soon they will meet dear friends, they  
deem. . . .

But grim Death, at the signal box,  
A few yards further, waits and mocks. . . .

"I wonder if the mother's come,  
And if that neighbour came to sup.  
Poor Jane! poor Jane! would I were  
home! . . .  
That signal arm wants putting up. . . .

"Come, Rosy, baby, come and play  
Under the apple-bloom; 'Tand back,  
The Express! the Express!' what's that  
you say?  
'Don't tand there, Daddy, on the tack!'

"But, Rosy, something seems amiss  
With you, and yet you look so well!  
Come and give your dad a kiss. . . .  
. . . What's that you've got? Why it's a  
bell!

"A harsh, shrill bell!—sounds very odd—  
Why, 'tis the electric telegraph!  
My mate at Otterington! O God!  
I thought it was dead Rosy's laugh!

"*Be ready!* that must be the quick  
Scotch train,—and I have never sent  
*Line clear* for that—the fog's more thick  
In me than there." His instrument

He straightway works, and turns to white  
 Red lamps that blocked the line; the "goods"  
 Snorts slowly on then—wildered fright  
 Holds him a moment, while he broods.

On memory flashed the second part  
 Of that Express now; and he heard  
 The heavy "goods" go; with a start  
 Flung wide the cabin-door, and peered;  
 Could see those three red baleful eyes  
 Slow, murderously slink to gloom . . .  
 . . . A whirlwind-winged volcano flies,  
 The engine huge, that drags to doom  
 The fated human hecatomb,  
 Shrieks madly, like a damned, lost soul,  
 Foreseeing; plunges to the goal,  
 Wrecked, shattered; one red ruin piled,  
 Wood crushed with twisted iron, child,  
 Man, woman mangled, all one wild  
 Dread, kneaded chaos; now a cry,  
 Such as makes hell's revelry,  
 Peals! maimed victims pointing halt,  
 Thronged round the signalman; "Your fault!  
 Your fault! your fault!" fierce flames de-  
 vour  
 At ease dead, living, in their power . . .

"My fault!" he sobs in telling it;  
 "I warned them that I was not fit;  
 There was a young child killed and burned;  
 Badly hurt too was his father;  
 The man recovered as I learned;  
 He said he would have died much rather."

## THE SECOND COMING

CHRIST is risen!  
 Hath burst the prison!

Some say the Lord is come again  
 And walks familiarly with men,  
 Though we may pass Him in the street,  
 Never surmising whom we meet,  
 Sit near Him at the social meal  
 Conversing, and yet never feel  
 The Royal Birth he would conceal.

For since He appeareth not in glory  
 Nor, as of old, in sacred story,  
 Girt with Oriental dress,  
 But, clothed as we are, comes to bless,  
 Who He is men never guess!

Yet when He passeth through the city  
 His dove-like eyes are dim with pity  
 For His overburdened poor;  
 Every pang their hearts endure  
 He beareth on His own; but when  
 He goeth among evil men,  
 Wearing ordinary garb,  
 All unknown to those who barb  
 Shafts for feeble folk oppressed,  
 The lowly, unapprehended Guest  
 Breatheth pity blent with anger,  
 Till Laughter's dissonant, harsh clangour  
 Jangles, or a steely smile  
 Flashes from faces that revile  
 Generous Folly, void of guile;  
 Wondering, inwardly they jeer  
 At One so strange and alien near.  
 But in Him pity blends with wrath  
 Aware of what a deep hell-broth  
 These have plunged their live souls in:  
 For suffering is less than sin.

We do not know Him better now,  
 Than the sires who crowned His brow  
 In shallow scorn,  
 With cruel thorn;  
 Though Christ be risen;  
 Have burst the prison!

Yet Innocence at mirthful feast,  
 Or a virgin-hearted priest,  
 Brother, father of his people  
 (Who in hushed church with tower or steeple,  
 Weary wings a moment furred,  
 Find a refuge from the world),  
 Or any lowly worshipper,  
 The Holy Presence may confer.  
 We find Him in the brave long strife,  
 Wherewith our common ways are rife,  
 In frank swift yielding health—yea, life—  
 Of one who champions a high cause,  
 Or saves a victim from the paws

Of strong Vicissitude, that glowers  
Ere it mangles and devours.

Intolerant of every wrong,  
He suffers patiently and long,  
To jeers and threats and calumny  
He returneth low reply ;  
Knowing Earth, our realm of night,  
Isled in unfathomable light !

Christ may be needlewoman, nurse,  
Rich or poor ; dull clouds disperse  
Before the undivined Revealer ;  
Reformer, scholar, poet, healer,  
Every calling, every trade,  
Claimeth honour of His aid ;  
In Whose mild genial radiance  
Stern-environing Circumstance  
Relenteth ; melts and gently glows ;  
Iron-bound doors fly wide, disclose  
Fair friends, in place of grisly foes.  
And far more even what He doth  
Maketh to prevail the Truth.  
Well indeed for one who can  
Discern the face of God in man !

In good governors, who serve ;  
In wan toilers who ne'er swerve  
From labour, bearing death for them,  
Yet for others gold and gem ;  
Through some poor sempstress He bestows  
Blessings, in return for blows.  
Christ is risen !  
Hath burst the prison !

Yet if indeed Thy feet have pressed  
Our common ways here in the West,  
Since mournful followers laid to rest  
Thy worn heart in the Syrian tomb,  
Hasten, Lord ! to rend the gloom ;  
Restore our ruined earth, O God,  
And make it worthy Thy abode !  
Or, cankered, old, worm-eaten, alloyed,  
Must the dark planet be destroyed,  
Her fragments scattered to the void,  
As hath befallen many a star  
Whose rays diffused her glory far,  
For Love to build upon the site  
A worthier world for Love's delight ?



## NOTES



## NOTES

1. It may be said by somebody that I have taken a liberty with the Mountains of the Moon. Let him that is without sin cast the first stone. Burton maintains that Ptolemy knew perfectly well what he was about in making a great range of mountains run east and west across Central Africa. It is even probable (from what Du Chaillu and others have seen) that snowy Kilimandjaro (Meru) and Kenia form its eastern limit, while Burton's Cameroons Mountain, with the mountains Du Chaillu saw, form its western. But, at any rate, the most recent discoveries seem to indicate that the Karagwé highlands also send out branches southward. These flank Tanganyika, and run down to the west of Lake Bangweolo or Bemba, afterwards trending off again south of the same lake to enclose lakes Nyassa and Shirwa (see Keith Johnston's Map of Livingstone's discoveries). The high plateau of Lobisa, where the river Chambezi probably takes its rise, may on this view be considered as belonging to the same system. But there are north and south coast ranges inosculating with these latitudinal mountains—while possibly neither Abyssinian highlands on the one hand, nor heights enclosing Albert Nyanza on the other, ought to be regarded as cut off from them. Where Livingstone's "four fountains of Herodotus" (which he was so keen to find) are, seems indeed to be still a moot point—like most matters connected with Central African geography.

2. Livingstone's discoveries remarkably confirmed Sir R. Murchison's theories as to the geological condition of South Africa—for he found no evidences of marine formations, which would be found if the land had been submerged, as other continents have been, since the oldest secondary era of geologists. In his books may be read his statements of fact, and his inferences on these matters. The great lakes that, at the time of the deposition of the oldest secondary strata, were much larger than at present, have been let out, he believes, by fissures suddenly opened in the flanking ranges, as at the Falls of Mosi-oa-tunya. (See Murchison on the Physical

Geography of Inner Africa, *Journal R. Geog. Society*, 1864.)

3. In Manyuema, west of Tanganyika, where Livingstone has been, the huts are built almost entirely of ivory; while in Ashantee gold is profusely employed.

4. Du Chaillu; and Schweinfurth, the record of whose very remarkable and daring explorations has been recently published. I am of course aware that Livingstone did not really know of the latter. It is indeed sad to think how near the two travellers were to one another when both were turned back.

5. I do not deem this inconsistent with Livingstone's large, though reverent and evangelical, utterance respecting the death of Sebituane. (See "Missionary Travels.")

6. A bird of Ashantee with brilliant red plumage. This vision is suggested by descriptions given of African races that practise human sacrifice—*e.g.* those of Ashantee and Dahomey.

7. The negroes can hardly conceive of death, in the case of young persons, without supposing it brought about by some malignant enchantment. They believe themselves surrounded by all kinds of spiritual agencies, good and bad—and, though their ideas about spiritual matters are vague and variable enough, they are often found to hold a somewhat crude form of the doctrine of transmigration.

8. The medicine-man or magician is relied on to point out who have bewitched the dead—which affords him ample scope for malignity. He makes each victim drink the ordeal poison (various plants are used—the *Mauve*, the *Mboundou*, &c.); then if the poison takes effect, the popular voice decides that the person is truly guilty, and the tribe despatch him or her with knives. It is said that the old rascal has some secret, by the knowledge of which he renders the poison innocuous to himself.

9. This anecdote is told in Livingstone's first great book of missionary travels—and it was by the imperfectly healed fracture of the bone of his left arm that the remains brought over to England were identified on their arrival as those of Livingstone; Sir W. Ferguson making the examination in the presence of the Rev. Dr. Moffat, Dr. Kirk, Mr. Webb of Newstead, and Mr. Waller, who had formerly seen Livingstone's injured arm.

10. This dog the traveller seems to have procured on his last voyage. Mr. Young, in his "Search for Livingstone," says that he heard of this dog at a village where he arrived; and where he gained such information as assured him of the falsehood of the traitor Musa's fabricated report respecting Livingstone's murder by the Ma-Zitu—said to have taken place in 1866. Sir R. Murchison, doubting the report, as President of the Royal Geographical Society, together with the Council, sent out Mr. E. Young to ascertain the truth. He proved a most competent leader. The native woman who spoke of this dog said, laughing, "it seemed to have two tails"—and the Rev. Mr. Waller afterwards suggested an explanation of this to Mr. Young; relating how Livingstone (ever fond of a joke) had disputed the fact alleged by learned men, that every dog under domestication still retains the tendency of a wild dog's tail to curl to the left, and complained that he was always obliged now, whenever he heard a dog bark, to march out of his way in order to examine his tail! Mr. Waller further suggested that Livingstone had picked up a dog, whose tail curled to the right; and that this controversy being explained to the natives, they made a hash of it, saying the dog Chitani seemed to have two tails.

11. At St. Paul de Loanda, the Portuguese settlement on the West Coast.

12. Mrs. Livingstone died at Shupanga, whither she had come from England to join her husband for the second time—having before gone with him, after their marriage, from Kuruman (Moffat's station) to Kolobeng; and after residing with him there as a missionary's wife, having travelled with him and some of their children to Lake Ngami, across the Kalahari desert, when the children greatly suffered. In the lyric that follows I have to acknowledge some obligation to a pretty poem in a small life of the traveller, published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton. Bishop Macenzie and Rev. Mr. Burrup are alluded to.

13. The Makololo chief, Sekeletu, and his people, furnished Livingstone with the means

necessary to enable him to go from Linyanti to the West Coast, and afterwards to the East. Without these "niggers," *who urged him and helped him to explore*—to open a highway for commerce and Christianity—he could have done nothing.

14. This was the little ship Livingstone built with the £6000 derived from the sale of his first book; for the steamer sent by Government did not answer his purpose of exploring the Zambesi and Shirè. This sum, as Stanley tells us, in his latest edition of "How I Found Livingstone," the traveller lost. Having crossed to Bombay in his little craft—a marvellous feat—he sold her for £2000; but lost this afterwards through the bankruptcy of the banker with whom it was deposited.

15. See Irving's "Life of Columbus."

16. A kind of cuckoo, so called by the natives.

17. This was before Stanley explored the north of Tanganyika with Livingstone, and found the Rusizi River to be an affluent. If there should be an affluent in the direction of the Kabogo Mountains, to the west, this might join the Lualaba; and so possibly (according to Livingstone's theory) the Nile. Perhaps Lieutenant Cameron, now at Ujiji, will discover this. Schweinfurth's discoveries seem to prove that this could only be by way of the Albert Nyanza; not by way of Petherick's branch, the Bahr el Ghazal.

18. Named by Livingstone "Victoria Falls." The native name signifies "sounding smoke." Mr. Oswell, who was with Livingstone when he first discovered the cataract, and had seen Niagara, gave the palm to Mosi-oa-tunya. The *Mowana* is the gigantic *Baobab* tree of Africa. The *Mohonono* tree is said to be like a cedar, and the *Motsouri* like a cypress. For a full account of the falls, see Livingstone's two books of travel. The water (of the river Zambesi, or Leeambayee) clears a moment as it falls, becomes a sheet of foam, or rather a sheet of *comets* of foam, separate from one another, with nucleus and tail. This phenomenon is apparently very remarkable; though I think I remember to have observed something like it in the falls of the Rhine. The "Evergreen Grove" is on a ledge of rock opposite the fall. But "Garden Island," where the travellers made a garden, is on the same side.

19. Ntanda, a native name for the planet Venus, meaning *firstborn*.

20. The Bakwain chief, with whom Livingstone resided at Kolobeng. For an account of Africaner, see the Rev. Dr. Moffat's "Missionary Travels."

21. Mr. Young, of Kelly, a true friend to Livingstone, without whose private generosity he could not have carried forward his great labours.

22. Dysentery was the disease to which he was subject, and of which he died (1873). The precise locality where he died seems almost strangely vague.

23. Zanzibar.

24. Jacob Wainwright, a negro slave, educated at Nassick College, near Bombay, came over in the *Mahwa* with his master's remains, and attended the funeral in Westminster Abbey. He read some of the English service over those parts of the body that were buried under the tree at Muilala, or Ilala. He was sent up to the Doctor from Zanzibar by Mr. Stanley, with other valuable men, as soon as the latter reached the coast—Livingstone having resolved to wait for them and other necessary supplies at Unyanyembe.

25. If in Lobisa the Chambezi rises—which is the same river that flows out of Lake Bangweolo or Bembia as the Luapula; which again, on issuing from Lake Moero, becomes Lualaba—and if the Lualaba send one branch to the Congo, and another to the Nile—then this claim may be made for the presumed whereabouts of Livingstone's death. On the other hand, Mr. Findlay still maintains (unless I mistake), with Sir S. Baker and Captain Burton, that Tanganyika is virtually the same as Albert Nyanza; or has an affluent north, which joins the latter. But as Livingstone died somewhere near the southern feeders of Lake Liemba, which is the same lake as Tanganyika, even on this view, the same claim can be made.

26. It is to be hoped that the provisions of Sir Bartle Frere's treaty, concluded with the Sultan of Zanzibar, which we owe to Livingstone's fearless representations by letter of the slave-trading horrors he witnessed on his last journey, will be faithfully carried out, and that England will see that they are.

27. Written at the time of the Bulgarian massacres.

28. Vendôme column at Paris.

29. The author in this volume, even where he speaks in his own person, hopes not to be held responsible for all the negations he may have expressed or implied in poems ranging, as regards their date of composition, over several years, a few of them having been written some time before his "Little Child's Monument," published in 1881. The earlier poems, however, have been revised; but, save in one instance, only the form of them, not the substance, has been altered. Yet, where not impersonal, all remain as expression of temporary moods, feelings, or ideas.

30. I am indebted for this incident to a writer in the *Daily Telegraph*.

31. See "Underground Russia," Stepniak, p. 208.

A young man, the better to guard the secret of the revolutionary printing-press, thus effaced himself from all record and recognition among the living, dwelling in a poisoned atmosphere, without ever leaving it, until, the place being discovered and captured by the police, he committed suicide.

32. Suggested by the fire in the Ring Theatre, at Vienna, after which to the poor, as chief mourners, was allotted the post of honour at the funeral in St. Stephen's.

33. See Pliny.

34. The metres of "Suspiria" and "Thalatta" were suggested to me by the sound of the sea; that of "Suspiria" is of course a modification of the hexameter, with rhyme in the alternate lines. To my ear it appears that the hexameter ought not be written with two single words in the last (trochaic) foot, but that in this particular, at least, the structure of the verse in its native sources should be respected.

35. This poem is suggested by old Killarney legends. But though it is to be read primarily as a fairy-tale, it is also intended to convey a further meaning. Only that is not to be sought in every detail, because I think that in all works of art, the story, form, or concrete presentment of whatever kind, ought to be paramount, and the inner significance only implicit, or suggested. The reader or spectator, moreover, has cause for complaint if the artist should, by over-insistence on this latter element, foreclose the right of all to find their own lesson or significance in a work of art. Barely didactic art there cannot be. But there should be more in a poem of this kind than the maker ever put there. Whether I have here succeeded in

doing what I wished is of course another question. Time and place are not respected in the world of enchantment, which is also that of Thought, whence all Creation issues. And Melcha, once having lived there, can no longer find the same old home-world, to which she was accustomed, when she would fain do so, the quiet, innocent, trustful home of early years. I will add, in order to explain one of the similes, that the Arabs believe the huge substructures of Baalbek and Tadmor were brought by the genii, slaves of Solomon.

36. At Hucknall Torkard, the sexton said to me, "You are now standing just over where the head lies."

37. The great composer grew deaf toward the close of his career. And, on one occasion, after conducting one of his own great symphonies, he was touched on the shoulder by another person, in order that he might turn and see the rapturous welcome which he could not hear.

38. The allusion is to the Magdalene, by Correggio, and that by D. G. Rossetti, lately exhibited in the Burlington Club.

39. Published in the *Leeds Mercury*, just before the elections, which gave a majority to the Liberals, in 1880, when Mr. Gladstone had expressed his determination not to take office again.

## EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

A (p. 1)

"So you have got hold of 'Behind the Veil'! I thought no copies were to be had now! I forbade it to be advertised and *I wanted it forgotten*. It is so very crude in style, though it is a quarry for poetry, and I have used some of it, and may use more elsewhere, for poems. It realises your sculptor, who had no power of expression for his idea! Before this, I wrote very fluent poetry by the yard, but with no ideas in it. Then I fell back on deep thought and study of prose; and when I tried to embody this in poetry, I made this fiasco of a book. But as you have it, you may as well know something about it. I was brought up a Calvinist. . . . Then, under the religious influence of F. D. Maurice, and philosophers like Swedenborg, I wrote this book, which on the whole is religious. Afterwards I gradually lost my beliefs, and became partly agnostic, partly pantheistic; and in those frames of mind 'Beatrice,' 'The Red Flag,' and 'Ravensburg' were written; also some of the other poems, republished from magazines in 'Songs of the Heights and Deep.' (However, much in that book was written when faith was restored to me, after Eric's death.) My first book inspired by faith, gradually restored after his death, was the 'Monument.' That is the record of doubt and despair, at first, and of faith only towards the end."—*September 3, 1889.*

B (p. 1)

"Certainly the matter ought, as Matthew Arnold points out, even for its own sake, to be as well presented as possible; but let it be always for the sake of the substance. And if you grant that, it will certainly follow that an *ultra* minuteness of finish, in cases where tenderness of human pathos is concerned, and equally where overwhelming passion or scorn are concerned, must necessarily let the feeling evaporate into a region of unreality, so that you get merely delicately presented mimetic images in a magic mirror, with the life very

much faded out of them. . . . I thank you for an expression, which commends itself to me as excessively happy, in describing what I feel about a special mood of my own—'passionate contemplation of nature.' It is just that. Now this, I own, a brooding, loving elaborateness of picturing appears to me to express. Certainly the mood is purely between nature and myself, and therefore the mode of picturing is so. To object to that, is to object to the mood; and, on the theory that nature shall be nothing but a background, it *is* objectionable; highly so, to the person who does not love Nature; but I submit not otherwise."—*January 21, 1869.*

"Right, right! You have hit the right nail on the head, and I am awfully glad of it. The 'agglutination' and exuberance that is complained of is essential to the individuality of the descriptions. Those people, with the best of intentions possible, are not in sympathy with me in my passionate adoration of Nature. That is the real point. I daresay the minuteness bothers them and seems to destroy the picture; and I fear it must with most people, even the cultivated; but if they had 'swooned away' into the Pan, as I often do, *they would see the thing as I have pictured it*. Abstractedly the more consecutive style, I certainly confess and allow, conforms more to the elementary law of art, that there shall be some central light."—*February 11, 1869.*

"Definite vision and intense emotion seem to me to be the first requisites in a poet."

C (p. 87)

"'To whom shall we go?' occurred to me standing in a somewhat similar position to that I describe at the outset. Misery is doubtless necessarily symbolised by night and storm. Superstition first and rational religion after, *as necessarily*, by two Churches. Then the falling back upon first principles of religion (still concrete) by a revisiting in vision the old scenes of Christ's original coming, while the

longing grows upon the seeker for a fresh human manifestation of the Divine adapted to the time."—*December 16, 1866.*

## D (p. 123)

"The last passage in 'A Vision of the Desert' means to express a half-despairing, yearning doubt as to individual immortality, which I do not now feel, or much less of it. The Father 'issues from the East with one new-born' at the individual's birth. But does the Father, as it were, reach the tranquil havens or oases of calm with a *dead* son on his breast or a living one? Is God ever alive, in Whom our spirits are and by Whom they are borne onward, but are *we*, after a brief life, put out within His bosom, do we cease from living? The poem ends with the expression of this doubt."—*September 1, 1891.*

## E (p. 134)

"'Thalatta' and 'Richmond Hill' doubt personal immortality and look to peace and rest in the absorption of our personality into the unconscious forces of Nature as I then (regarding the world from the scientific point of view of force) accounted them; though I did believe they were latently spiritual, and would develop into self-consciousness. (See the end of 'Autumn in Ireland,' and 'Pan,' for instance, in 'Beatrice'.)"

"Though now an idealist, not a realist, I still hold development upward to man and beyond him of man upward. Now the very lowest is to me a soul."

"In 'Ravensburg' immortality is purely dramatic and I did not believe in it. The change of view comes first in the 'Monument.'"—*November 13, 1891.*

## F (p. 203)

"I am not the poet of free-will as Browning was. So far, I may be less a moral poet. . . . My Calvinism is much what it was, but it is now turned into Pantheism, with the additional idea of ultimate restoration for all, and establishment of each in the function proper to him as integral factor and unit (or cell) of the universal organism, through the experience, good or evil, he has gone through (which yet, mind you, may sink him into the hells for ages, as it sunk Sigismund and my monk Benedict). I am not prepared to say that many may not find this an immoral doctrine. I cannot help it. Only so can I keep faith

at all, in view of the frightful moral and physical evils I see around me."

## G (p. 249)

"After Eric's death a complete revolution took place in my thought . . . very gradually . . . which, however, was not accomplished till two years later. I was before that an uncompromising champion of the so-called common-sense view of matter and force, as external to all minds, existing out there by themselves, as they seem to do: I was an opponent of Berkeley and wrote many an essay in that sense: and then the correlation of body and soul being so close (as is proved by physiology, of which I read at one time a great deal), it was impossible for me to believe in a personal survival of the destruction of this body. Now I hold that the soul creates for itself its own appropriate body. (See the end of 'Modern Faust' and 'De Profundis') . . . Do you believe in 'systems,' the elements of which never contradict each other? That's where I think a poet is superior to a professional philosopher, that he won't and can't be bound by any systems—the Universe is too big; none of them will fit. 'And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.' Therefore we must sometimes contradict ourselves, till we get the higher truth which includes both horns of the dilemma."—*1891.*

## H (p. 329)

"'Melcha' is one of my longest philosophical poems, allegorical, though the first part can be read simply as a fairy story. It is the philosophy of my ante-Christian years, a sort of pantheistic evolution philosophy. It is also the tragedy of two loving, but differing natures; intellect and genius, and goodness and heart; their sundering and final reconciliation."—*May 6, 1889.*

## I (p. 379)

"The ode 'Pan' has condensed the relationship of my thoughts about Nature and Christ fairly well. Nature lives, pulsates with spiritual life; before these 'gods' I must bow; but they must bow, in their turn, before the perfection of Humanity, which is not beauty but the spirit of the little child, 'the secret of Jesus,' and that is realised in 'the Babe of Bethlehem,' before Whom therefore the Pagan oracles grow dumb. Yet *they do* represent gods. I worship beauty, will, power, energy,

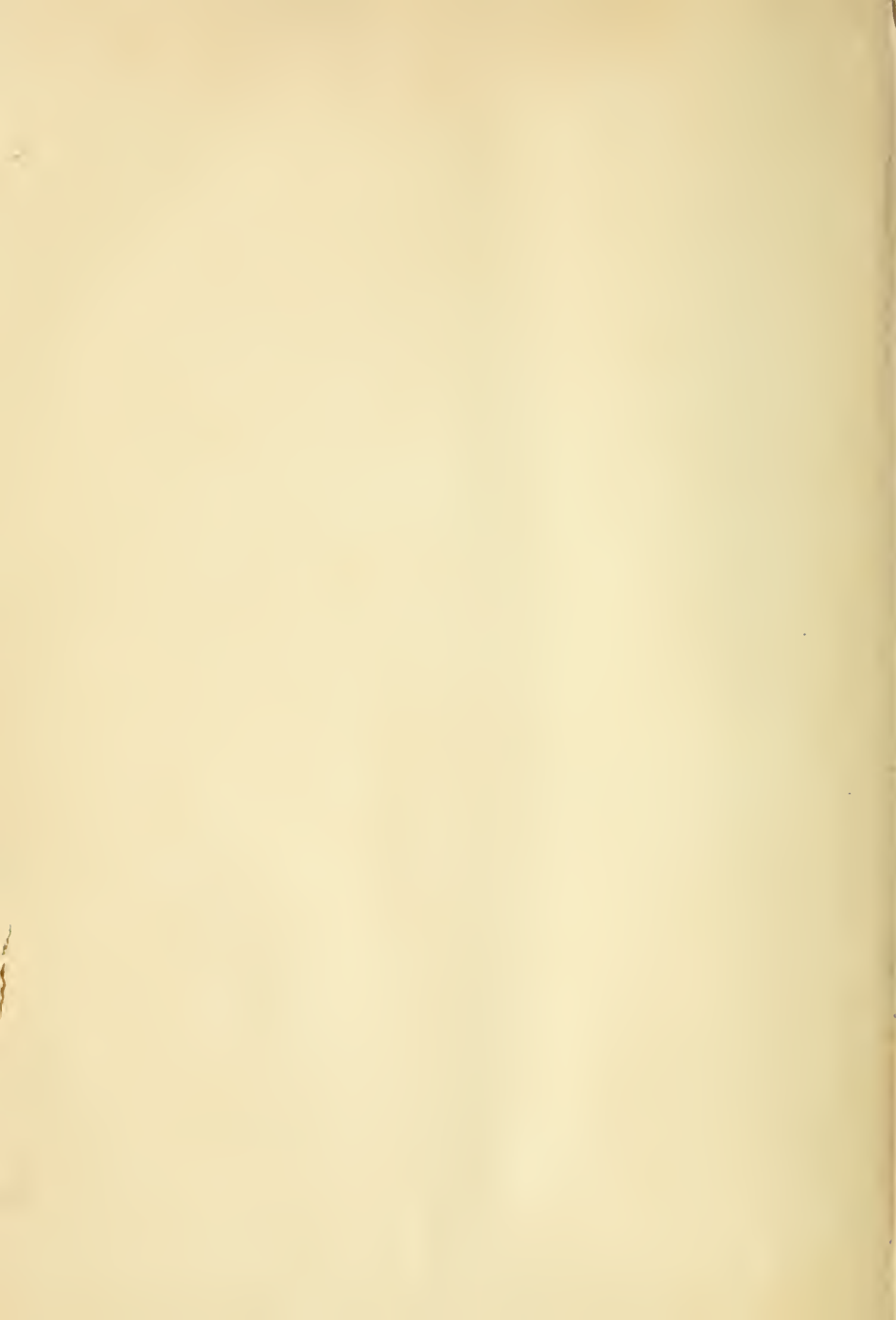
intellect, but the Little Child is more Divine still. He is my most adequate incarnation of the unseen and unknown God, and He is the Son of the Father, the Word or Logos at its highest, the God Who is in all of us, the inmost truth and substance of our nature, Love, Justice, Intuition (or Faith). Paganism teaches us to assert the superficial outer separate self; Christianity to elicit the true, inner, solitary self, which is latent, and undeveloped. . . . 'Pan' is a restoration of the old mythology. I am an idealist of a peculiar kind. I hold that Nature is the objective manifestation, or body, of spirits, intelligences, akin to but external to us, and that they are mixed, some good, some bad, some undeveloped and below man. Ergo, according to me, Schiller is wrong in lamenting that the gods are dead because Science has killed them; and Mrs. Browning is equally wrong in holding that scientific truth (so called) is enough, and, when added to Christianity, is even better than the old mythology. No; Pan is *not* dead; *i.e.* the ancients worshipped real existing 'gods,' *i.e.* spirits or intelligences con-

stituting Nature. But Christ, our blessed Lord, supersedes them because He reveals the innermost of the universal God; Love, self-sacrifice, patience, the child-spirit in whom all intelligences 'live, move, and have their being.' *They* only reveal the outermost; therefore, 'Pan *is* dead,' *i.e.* conquered by the higher revelation of God which we possess, which was made in the fulness of time in Christ. The dispensation of the spirit will follow, when all shall be in Christ. How do I reconcile this with Science? I will only say Science reveals only a law and order of manifestation to us, relative to our limitation of faculty; but not causes, not origins, not substance, only phenomena. What *is* the cause and substance? Spirit, soul, there is nothing else substantial, eternal,—and that, according to my philosophy, is necessarily individual, personal. 'Matter' is but a body or manifestation of soul or spirit. There are as many kinds of matter as there are species of souls capable of apprehending and perceiving differently. The suns, moons, planets, are themselves spirits, as the ancients have taught.'—1893.

THE END









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